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ABSTRACT

This publication discusses selected elements of community involvement programs and processes that directly relate to the classroom teacher. The areas covered give the teacher a theoretical base to support the concept of community involvement as well as practical ways to implement basic elements of community involvement to enhance the learning processes of students. These areas are a rationale for teachers' involvement with the community and use of volunteers in the classroom techniques and strategies of home visitation. Sample instruments and materials are also included to aid the teacher in initiating, implementing, and evaluating community involvement as it directly relates to the classroom. (Authors/JD)

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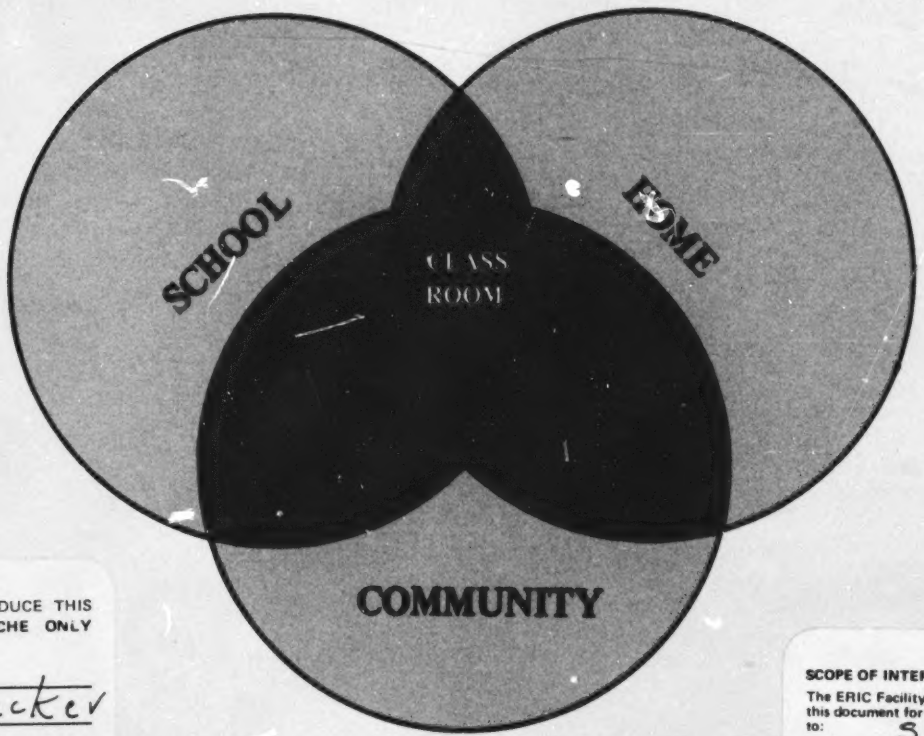
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS



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COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS

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Preface

The rising number of community schools and the increasing number of mandates for community involvement indicate a trend that will affect teachers on an escalating scale. Teachers may find themselves faced with community involvement with or without a choice, quite often without input into, or knowledge of, the decision to implement such a program. School administration, boards of education or federal and state mandates can require community involvement or participation. Teachers often are not involved in the planning or initial decision to involve community, even though they are critical in the process of integrating community and school. Why then, are they not always involved, trained, and an integral part of the whole process?

One explanation might be the inservice education situation, or lack thereof, in most school districts. Inservice education has long been a topic of much dispute. The arguments range from stating that school systems cannot afford it, to stating that if there is any inservice it should concentrate on the "basics." The innumerable pro's and con's of this topic will not be dealt with here. The lack of inservice opportunities must be taken as a given and the question asked, where then do teachers become motivated by, supportive of, and involved in community involvement programs? If such programs are to be successfully implemented, it is only realistic to assume that when this concept is incorporated into policy and expectations include affecting the K-12 program, teachers must receive some form of inservice that is relevant to them in the process of educating the students in their classroom.

Teachers can learn about community involvement through courses, reading, attending workshops, or a number of other ways. But, if they are primarily interested in how community involvement relates to the teacher in the classroom, they will find few materials directly addressing this interest.

This publication is intended to identify selected elements of community involvement programs and processes that directly relate to the classroom teacher. The areas covered will give the teacher a theoretical base to support the concept of community involvement as well as practical ways to implement basic elements of community involvement to enhance the learning process in the K-12 program.

Introduction

by William L. Smith
Director, Teacher Corps, USOE
Washington, D. C.

The trend to involve community in federal social service, health, and education programs is steadily increasing. This trend is based on recognizing that the ability to meet the needs of the community to be served and ensure the probability of success for these programs is dependent upon involving the community in the planning, development and implementation of each program.

In education, this trend is evidenced by several major federal programs. For example, the Title I Parent Advisory Councils, the Urban/Rural School Development Programs' School/Community Councils, and Teacher Corps' School/Community Councils are requirements for receiving federal funds. The implications of community involvement for teacher training and retraining are obvious. Two recent USOE Study Commission recommendations have emphasized the importance of teacher training programs to recognize this need to prepare teachers for community involvement. The School Administrators Committee of the Study Commission on Undergraduate Education and the Education of Teachers called for maximum parity in teacher education and re-education among parents, administrators, teachers, community, and students. The Deans Committee of the Study Commission recommended field experience in community schools for the technical education of teachers and adjacent community formats; the context in which teachers should be educated should be the community; and the skills and knowledge expected of teachers should be community-building skills.

These recommendations affect several aspects of teacher training and retraining. One of these aspects is inservice education, which primarily addresses three prominent context areas: child development, cultural diversity and education of the handicapped. All three of these areas are directly related to or dependent upon some form of parent or community involvement to have benefit to the student in the classroom. School programs reflect community needs. Teachers must know their school community if they are to address these needs and apply the skills developed through inservice programs to meet these needs.

A second area affected by these recommendations is teacher preparation programs at institutions of higher education. If teachers are to be prepared for community involvement, new courses and field-based experiences must be developed in community education. To understand and relate to students and their community that will be receiving educational services, teachers must be aware of socio-economic factors, community organization, and other environmental situations affecting each student in the process of learning.

Additionally, the whole idea of materials development needs to be considered. To assist in the training and retraining of teachers in community involvement, materials that are directly related to the classroom teachers' needs and roles are necessary. The intent of the publication in your hand is

not only to focus on this latter area but to provide the basic knowledge and tools for the teacher to initiate and sustain community involvement in the classroom.

The first chapter provides a rationale and support for community involvement, based on research findings and historical development. The role of the family and community, including the benefits of involving them, in the educational process are presented as powerful ingredients affecting student attainment. Also presented are some implications that could be a result if the community does not become involved in the education process; the need for relevancy; the need for training; accountability; and benefits to teachers, students, and community that are derived from interaction and involvement.

The second chapter describes the essential elements of a volunteer program. Roles, responsibilities, orientation, continued training, recruitment strategies and techniques, recognition suggestions, evaluation procedures and a training packet are presented. With these materials the teacher can initiate a volunteer program that will enhance the learning that takes place in the classroom.

Chapter three, "Utilizing Community Resources In and Out of the Classroom," provides the teacher with the tools necessary to relate curriculum to community and societal roles, as well as ways to identify, evaluate, and plan for the use of geographic and other available resources. Several suggested lists, exercises, forms, and examples of possible experiences are included to involve the teacher in the community.

Parents come from wide socio-economic backgrounds and experiences. Being able to communicate and the desire to do so, with all parents, will change the parent-teacher attitudes that will in turn affect how the student approaches learning. Communication requires many diversified approaches. One of the most beneficial examples of parent-teacher relationships is treated in chapter four on Home Visits. Many parents or families are not in a position to receive and understand adequate information regarding school programs and their child's progress in school. The teacher can be the primary initiator, through home visits, to alleviate this situation. Parents often receive an information overload from the school but have no one to turn to for assistance in processing and interpreting this information. This can result in an apathetic attitude toward the school. Teachers may be hesitant to become involved in home visitations due to the lack of training in the skills necessary to work with parents to broaden their expectation for their children and cooperate with the basic knowledge to initiate communication with parents.

The final chapter presents a challenge to educators to begin the process, based on the data that cites the home and social environments as primary variables influencing the child's academic achievement, that will utilize the tools and put into practice the concepts presented in this publication. Implications and possible future repercussions that education could be faced with if there is no response to the need for community involvement are discussed with some discouraging and disturbing alternatives suggested.

Teacher Corps, recognizing the need for inclusion of the community as an essential element in any personnel development system, has a community based education component in its training and retraining program for teachers of low-income students. This component is strong at present and will continue to grow with Teacher Corps' commitment to provide field-based training and reflect the needs of the community to be served.

Rationale for Teachers' Involvement with Community

by Donna L. Hager
School of Education
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Most people will agree that schools are having "ism" problems; increasing drop-outism, financialism, vandalism, skepticism, irrelevantism, and failurism. Innovative programs of all kinds have been tried; some have helped, and some have not. But, educators cannot afford to discontinue searching for more effective educational experiences if solutions are to be found. One proposed solution is back to basics. Back to basics might be one answer, if society could be turned back to basics; but many people might find a washboard, a horse drawn plow, a spinning wheel, or a woodstove inconsistant with the rest of their environment. As long as society continues to move forward in technology, educators have no choice but to move forward in education.

Research on the interaction of parents, teachers, and the community and the effect on children's learning provides a rationale for increased community involvement. The impact of the 1966 James S. Coleman report goes far beyond the integration issues. The following quote is cited more often as the trend toward community involvement in education increases:

> Taking all these results together one implication stands out above all: That schools can bring little influence to bear on a child's achievement that is independent of his background and general social context, and that this very lack of an independent effect means that the inequalities imposed on children by their home, neighborhood, and peer environment are carried along to become the inequalities with which they confront adult life at the end of school.[1]

Coleman also concluded that there is a direct relationship between the ability of parents and children to influence their own future and student attainment. He did not say that the schools are powerless but emphasized that the family is powerful. This conclusion is supported by other educators interested in the effects of parent-school relationships:

> Yet, conceptualization of the characteristics of parent-child interactions (Schaefer, 1972) suggests that, beside the primary responsibility borne for the child, parents have a relation with the child which exceeds that with other adults in priority, duration, continuity, amount, extensity, intensity, pervasiveness, and consistency. Therefore, "the continuation of these different characteristics of parent-child interaction suggests that their cummulative impact upon the child's development would be substantial." [2]

As part of this powerful role, the family educates the child in a variety of ways. Cremin suggested, "Every family has a curriculum, which it teaches quite deliberately and systematically over time." [3] He then elaborated the role of the family:

> The family mediates the culture, and it also mediates the way in which religious organizations, television broadcasters, schools, and employers mediate the culture. Families not only teach in their own right, they also screen and interpret the teaching of churches, synagogues, television broadcasters, schools and employers.[4]

When parents become directly involved with the school in the education of their children, they are working with the teacher for the benefit of their children and themselves.

> . . . As parents and citizens participate in reform they are developing a climate of high expectations. As children respond to the new interest and raised expectations, improved self-assurance and achievement should result.[5]

The community *is* becoming more involved and *is* being encouraged to do so from many sources. Community, in this sense, is best defined by Dr. William Smith, Teacher Corps Director, as:

> That part of society which includes all of the human beings who have some kind of vested interest in what is going on in that school. They want to play some kind of role in what goes on in that school, either in sending the children, or making some judgments about what happens. In other words, they want to know what the teachers, who are responsible for the delivery of educational services, do with kids.[6]

Many parents are hesitant to volunteer. These parents, especially low-income or minority, need to be encouraged to become directly involved in their children's education. Unfortunately the only time many parents have any contact with their child's teacher is if there is a problem. For some, school experiences may not have been pleasant. Teachers are often equally reluctant to initiate community involvement because they have had no training in this area.

This situation may be alleviated when teachers accept the interest of the community as a positive situation. The teacher can be a primary initiator of *positive* involvement. When the teacher makes an attempt to work collaboratively with the community, action groups which often come together because of a problem, can be constructively utilized for the improvement of an educational program and instructional services.

Teacher preparation programs are now becoming aware of the deficiency in preparing teachers to work with the community. Many professionals as well as the public are now calling for some school-community based teacher education:

- Deans of Education have called for such preparation in *Obligation for Reform*–the report of the Higher Education Task Force on the Improvement and Reform of American Education.
- The NEA, in responding to recent incidents in Appalachia has called for more collaboration between parents and teachers but also called for investigation of people who make a business of manipulating parents in school-community confrontations.
- The PTA has called for stronger parents roles in policy making and recruitment.
- Don Davies, Director of the Institute for Responsive Education, is heading the "Citizen Participation in Education" group that is organizing hundreds of citizens groups and has created a bibliography of citizen participation in all forms of education including the education of teachers.
- The School Administrators Committee of the Study Commission on Undergraduate Education and the Education of Teachers has called for maximum parity in teacher education and re-education among parents, administrators, teachers, community, and students.[7]
- Silberman in the Carnegie Study of Education of Educators stated:

  > If our concern is with education. . . we cannot restrict our attention to the schools, for education is not synonymous with schooling. Children–and adults–learn outside school as well as–perhaps more than–in school. To say this is not to denigrate the importance of the schools; it is to give proper weight to all the other educating forces in American society; the family and the community; student peer groups; television and the mass media; the armed forces; corporate training programs; libraries, museums, churches, boy scout troops, 4-H clubs. . .[8]

As the teacher training institutions become aware of this need in teacher preparation programs and in some areas are changing their curriculum to prepare teachers to be effective in the domain of community involvement, they are responding to the need to cure the "isms" of education and to the research supporting the need for teachers to look outside of the classroom. But the rationale for teachers' involvement in the classroom should focus on how a relationship with the community can enhance the learning that takes place in the classroom.

Terrel H. Bell, former U. S. Commissioner of Education (1975) told the American Association of School Administrators, "The key to dramatic progress in American education is to gain a

rededication to learning in the home. . . schools cannot educate the youth of American without the solid support and backing of the families, the homes and the communities from which these children come."[9] The person holding the key to this rededication is the teacher who has direct access to the home through the student.

Research has shown that teachers making contact with the parents and/or other community groups can help reduce some of the problems facing the teaching profession itself. Teachers should be encouraged to make community contact because of the potential benefits. Even if positive improvement is slow, it will help to begin changing some of the startling and alarming statistics concerning schools and education. A preliminary survey done by the Senate Sub-Committee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency indicated an increase over a three-year period (1970-1973) in:

- assaults on students 83.3%
- assaults on teachers 77.4%
- number of weapons confiscated from students by school authorities 54.4%
- rapes and attempted rapes 40.1%
- drug and alcohol offenses on school property 37.5%
- robberies of students and teachers 36.7%
- homicides in the schools 18.5%
- burglaries of school buildings 11.8%

In addition to these figures are the data on drop-outs, attendance and achievement.

- A National Assessment of Educational Programs (NAEP) Survey of approximately 5,000 17 year olds in school during 1974 indicated that 11% of them were functionally illiterate; i. e., were unable to read road signs, maps, advertisements, forms, and reference works.[11]
- The College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) reported that, in 1975, the average scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) dropped by the largest margin yet recorded. The SAT scores of 1975 high school graduates declined 10 points below marks of 1974 graduates on the verbal section and eight points on the mathematical section. SAT scores began to decline in 1964, but the drops prior to 1970 were small compared to those of recent years.[12]

These statistics indicate the "state of the art" in education. If possible causes are related to lack of parental or community involvement in education and if the teacher or someone with access to the parents does not initiate or support an increase in involvement, what then? Urie Bronfenbrenner commented on this issue:

> As we read the evidence, both from our own research and that of others, we cannot escape the conclusion that if the current trend persists, if the institutions of our society continue to remove parents, other adults, and older youth from active participation in the lives of children, and if the resulting vacuum is filled by the age-segregated peer group, we can anticipate increased alienation, indifference, antagonism, and violence on the part of the younger generation in all segments of our society—middle class children as well as the disadvantaged. . . If adults do not once again become involved in the lives of their children, there is trouble ahead for American society.[13]

Totten and Manley said something similar in a different way: "Education is too important to be left to the educator—also education is too complex to be left to lay citizens. . . ."[14]

Adding to the rationale for community involvement in education is the need to make learning relevant. Every teacher has realized that all learning does not take place in the classroom, and most would agree with John Dewey's statement:

> The development within the young of the attitudes and dispositions necessary to the continuous and progressive life of a society cannot take place by direct conveyance of beliefs, emotions, and knowledge. It takes place through the intermediary of the environment, the environment consists of the sum total of conditions which are concerned with the execution of the activity characteristic of the living being. The social environment consists of all activities of fellow beings that are bound up in carrying on the activities of any of its members. It is truly educative in its effect, in its efforts, in the degree in which an individual appropriates the purpose which actuates it, becomes familiar with its methods and subject matters, acquires needed skills, and is saturated with its emotional spirit.[15]

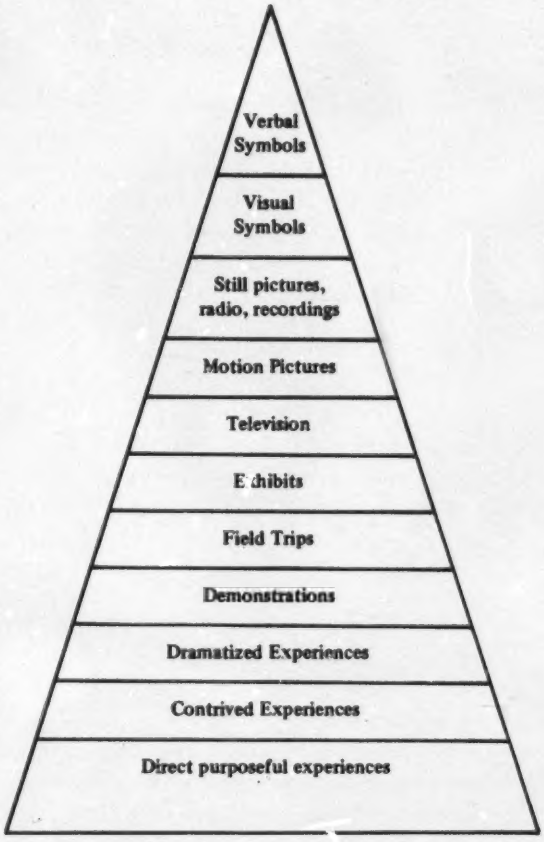
The need for relevancy in education is well documented and teachers can ill afford to approach education employing teaching methods like the following one:

> Sometimes we are almost like the teacher of biology who pulled down the classroom window shades as a circus parade was passing by, so that his lecture on quadruped zoology would not be interrupted by extraneous factors outside.[16]

Although they may agree with the need for relevancy, many teachers may not realize the support history provides for their roles in initiating action. Tracing the history of community involvement starts with the Greeks and continues to the present. In 1938, one of the first books to deal specifically with community and schools was edited by Samuel Everett. The following is a quote from his book, *The Community School:*

> Education is part and parcel of the very fact of living. . . . The social nature of the individual is but testimony to how the learning process is at the same time the process of becoming. We learn what we live, and what we thus learn is through the very process of living built into the structure of one's being, there to form the foundation for behavior.[17]

To support the concept of learning through the process of living, Edgar Dale (1956) visually depicted the ways in which children learn. This visual aid has come to be known as the "Cone of Experience."[18]



In addition to helping to meet the need to make education relevant and helping to respond to the increasing demands for solutions to problems facing education, community involvement in the classroom is beneficial to the students. A paper entitled "Preparing Teachers for Parent Involvement" by Daniel Safran, Director of the Center for the Study of Parent Involvement, has a section answering the question, "Why involve parents?" called *Good for Children.* Safran wrote:

> Children profit from almost every opportunity parents may have to demonstrate an interest in them. Parents' increased understanding of school programs and their participation as school resources and change-agents contribute to better preparation of preschoolers and to schools more responsive to children's needs.[19]

Safran referred to Stearns' studies of the impact of parent involvement on the achievement of children in compensatory education programs (1973). She analyzed three roles played by involved parents: tutors of their own children; paraprofessional employees; decision makers.

Whatever the reason, the research shows that children do better when parents are involved. "In some cases it is hypothesized that children do better because of improved self-image; in still other cases it is due to program adaptation brought about by parent perspectives' influencing decisions."[20] This research is further supported by the conclusions of Bronfenbrenner after surveying the effects of various intervention programs.

> The evidence indicates that the family is the most effective and economical system for fostering and sustaining the development of the child. The evidence indicates further that the involvement of the child's family as an active participant is critical to the success of any intervention program. Without such family involvement, any effects of intervention, at least in the cognitive sphere, are likely to be

ephemeral, to appear to erode rapidly once the program ends. In contrast, the involvement of the parents as partners in the enterprise provides an on-going system which can reinforce the effects of the program while it is in operation, and help to sustain them after the program ends. [21]

Also of concern to teachers is how parent involvement benefits them. In addition to the benefits to the school and community, Safran gives the following five examples directly related to teachers:

1. It enables teachers to draw upon supplemental and often unique adult resources;
2. It provides teachers with additional information on the children they teach;
3. It permits teachers to understand more about the community serve by the school;
4. It opens up consumers of educational services, encouraging teachers to recognize other perceptions of what they do;
5. It makes possible political alliances between teachers-as workers and parents-as-consumers in contending with school bureaucracies.[22]

Further support for the interaction of teachers and parents, and its affect on children's learning can be found in Beller's (1969) research on teacher attitudes. This research has shown that where teachers "exhibited greater respect than other teachers for the child's family was associated with a child's readiness to gain from education experiences in the classroom." [23] Parental involvement in the school does influence teacher attitudes towards the children. Rosenthal and Jacobsen also reported changes in teaching perceptions of the ability of children whose parents were involved in the school in a way observable by the teachers.[24]

The trend to involve community in education, through federal, state, and local policy is growing. Based on the research findings, the critical role of the teacher is becoming more and more evident. Hiemstra distinguishes three important roles for the teacher in the educative community:

> . . . instructor, curriculum developer (using some of the resources of the community), and liaison with the community. . . . by getting out into the community as a liaison or to develop educational curricula, the teacher will learn more about the community and, thereby, should be able to improve his or her instructional endeavors. [25]

Increasing amounts of time at educational conferences as well as increasing numbers of journal articles, research monographs and other publications are directed toward the role of the teacher in community involvement. An example of this trend is evidenced in a conference report from Oregon. The purpose of this conference was to bring teachers together to consider the philosophical and practical aspects of the Community School concept and its relationship to classroom teachers. One unique feature of the conference was an activity designed to produce a product (the Conference Report), which had the potential to assist other Community Education Centers, state and local teachers' associations, and local school districts, all of which were included in the planning and execution of the conference.

In the first article in the report, "The Centrality of the Teacher to Community Education: Views of the Conference Participants," Dee Schofield summarized the conference. The majority of the following excerpts are from teachers and provide a rationale for community involvement from their viewpoint.

> . . . Because it also attempts to utilize community resources for the benefit of everyone (from preschoolers to senior citizens), it can potentially receive a much broader base of support than the schools currently enjoy.
>
> . . . And it offers one possible means of giving classroom teachers much needed freedom to be innovative and to fully exercise their professional abilities.
>
> . . . The successful implementation of community education depends heavily upon the classroom teacher. Teachers are in a unique position; they function at the very center of the educational process.
>
> . . . Community Education opens the way for utilization of mass media to educate the public about the schools, and to insure that the schools know what is going on in the community as a whole.

> . . . Several (groups) emphasized the role of the community-as-classroom, and one stated that community education can 'use the whole community as an educational lab.'
>
> . . . Groups considered *people* as the major resource. . . noting the value of using non-school citizens as teachers in order to make the curriculum more flexible and relevant. . . parents can come to see the school as a means of success for themselves and their children.
>
> . . . Teachers agreed that what is taught—the contents of education—must be aimed at narrowing the gap between the school and the 'real world.' [26]

These teachers were also cognizant of the financial concerns that face most school districts today and addressed this issue in relation to community involvement.

> . . . They seemed very aware of the threat that economic instability holds for the schools. This instability in large part originates in lack of public support, and therefore, in defeated school bond issues.
>
> . . . Community education programs means 'improved public relations (which). . . . means increased financial support for the schools. . . . If the schools truly meet the public's needs, then the public in turn, will meet the schools' financial requirements. It is essential, therefore, not to develop community education programs 'just to sell budgets'. . . but to ensure the best educational services to the community.
>
> . . . Community education relieves overcrowding during the day session by making credits for K-12 students available through night classes. More efficient use of school facilities is more fully realized.
>
> . . . Community education provides a link to alternative funding sources for education.
>
> . . . The importance of the community school coordinator in encouraging communication and harmony within the school was recognized by most groups. [27]

A need was also expressed by the teachers, the need for inservice directed toward information, role clarification, and orientation relating community involvement directly to teachers, both professionally and personally. They stated that if some type of inservice was not provided, some teachers would feel threatened and therefore hesitate to become involved with, or supportive of, such a program. It was pointed out that in contrast, most teachers who have an adequate background and preparation for community involvement understand the essential role they play and to not experience this hesitency. They see community involvement as increasing the impact they can have on both students and the community.

> . . . These teachers seemed, for the most part, to see themselves as central to the implementation of the community education concept, and this view is affirmed by the experience of countless schools across the country that have instigated community education programs.
>
> . . . Several groups saw community education as a way of reinforcing teachers' position as professionals. 'Community education multiplies the teacher impact' by utilizing non-professional help. [28]

Conclusion

The overall conclusions are that the community has a significant impact on the child which cannot be ignored in the process of educating the child; that the teacher is the primary liaison for the child with school and community; and that community involvement in the classroom is essential if the child is to receive the best education available to him. A comment by Minzey provides additional food for thought:

> We know that a child is the product of his environment, and yet, we touch a brief portion of that environment and presume to influence his total education, of the 8,760 hours in a year of a child's life, we are involved with him for only 900 hours or about 12 percent (*sic* 10%) of his time in the school setting. Perhaps we are expecting too great a return for such little input. [29]

Cremin summarized the rationale for community involvement:

> In sum, then, to think comprehensively about education we must consider policies with respect to a wide variety of institutions that educate, not only schools and colleges, but libraries, museums, day-care centers, radio and television stations, offices, factories, and farms. To be concerned solely with school, given the educational world we are living in today, is to have a kind of fortress mentality contending with a very fluid and dynamic situation. [30]

FOOTNOTES

1. James S. Coleman, et al., *Equality of Educational Opportunity* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1966), p. 325.
2. Alice S. Honig, *Parent Involvement in Early Childhood Education* (Washington, D. C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1975), p. 9.
3. Lawrence A. Cremin, *Public Education* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1976), pp. 22-23.
4. Ibid.
5. M. D. Fantini, "Participation, Decentralization, and Community Control," *National Elementary Principal* 48 (April 1969), p. 25.
6. William L. Smith, "National View of Changing Teacher Education," *The Common*, November 1974, p. 8.
7. School Administrators Committee Study Commission on Undergraduate Education and the Education of Teachers, *What is School-Community Based Teacher Education and Why Should Administrators be Interested in It?* (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Printing and Duplicating Service, 1975), p. 9.
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Teachers and Volunteers In the Classroom

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The use of volunteers in the classroom is one of the most rewarding areas of community involvement for the individual teacher. When volunteers are invited to assist in the classroom, increased opportunity for professional guidance to students becomes available. Volunteers can relieve the teacher of many tasks that do not require professional attention. The use of volunteers in the classroom enables the teacher to devote more time to planning, diagnosing the individual needs of students, and prescribing learning activities to meet these needs.

Additional benefits accuring through the use of volunteers are:

- Volunteers extend the number of people available to help teacher. Educators for years have pointed at student-teacher ratios as too high.
- Volunteers often bring skills to their tasks that the professional educators don't have. This is not meant to imply that we believe a teacher's education is wasted. Rather it is meant to imply that the personalities and needs of young people are so diverse that one just cannot expect to find enough talents and resources amongst a small number of teachers to maximize opportunities for all youngsters.
- Perhaps more important than all other reasons, however, is the positive effects volunteering can have on the volunteer himself. And if one can't accept such an esoteric value then the public relations value is certainly still there.[1]

In this chapter, it is assumed that the classroom teacher involved in the volunteer effort has a commitment to the program because of a belief in its efficacy and importance. Each teacher's commitment is stressed because to a large extent, the success of the classroom volunteer program is dependent on teacher knowledge of the role of the volunteer, and teacher attitude and skills in utilizing volunteers.

When the role of the volunteer in relation to the teacher is made clear in the initial planning, confusion and uncertainty are avoided when the plan is implemented. Winecoff and Powell have identified five major reasons for frustration and failure in using volunteers:

1. Lack of adequate overall planning and administrative support.
2. Lack of adequate involvement and preparation of teachers.
3. Lack of adequate training programs and specified tasks for volunteers/paraprofessionals.
4. Lack of an adequate volunteer management system.
5. Lack of adequate recruiting strategies.[2]

If inadequacies in these areas are major causes of failure, it is reasonable to assume that careful attention to the inclusion of these components can be a determinate in developing a successful program.

The Role of the Volunteer

In the initial planning stages, a careful description of the role of the volunteer should be developed to prevent any confusion once the program is under way. It must be made clear what the teacher's responsibilities are in relation to the volunteer. It is helpful to view the volunteers as a support system in the educational process. The National School Volunteer Program states the role of a volunteer as:

> A volunteer always works under the direction and supervision of a teacher or other members of the school staff. A volunteer is never considered a substitute for a member of the school staff. A volunteer is never expected to perform professional services. The teacher is always responsible for content and techniques.[3]

The American Federation of Teachers has also issued a policy statement addressing the role of the volunteer:

> There is a place for lay volunteer assistance within the school setting. . . but the use of these volunteers must be restricted to those activities approved by the teacher, and under no circumstances must a teacher be forced to use or supervise a lay person. . . the direction, control, and responsibility for the educational process must rest firmly with the teacher.[4]

In a handbook for volunteers, the U. S. Office of Education set up seven principles to draw the line between volunteers and professional personnel:

1. DIAGNOSING of student needs is a professional task.
2. PRESCRIBING instructional programs is a professional task.
3. SELECTING appropriate materials is a professional task.
4. PRESENTING or teaching content is a professional task.
5. COUNSELING with students is a professional task.
6. EVALUATING student progress and achievement is a professional task.
7. INITIATING or determining the why, the how, the where, and the when are professional tasks.[5]

The USOE Handbook provided some latitude to the above principles by the statement, "Depending on his skill, abilities, training, and interest, the school volunteer may be called upon to perform more complex tasks related to the reinforcement of instruction." [6]

The planning process should include the development of written role descriptions, specific duties, training requirements and time lines to assist the volunteer and teacher in avoiding confusion during the initial stages of involvement. Training sessions should include the teacher and the volunteers together. These training sessions must be based on the needs identified by the teacher and allow for different entry level skills of the volunteers.

Orientation

One of the most important training sessions is the orientation. This session will set the tone, establish the commitment, and create rapport. Even if this first session is a one-to-one situation, the following should be done:

- Explain general philosophy of the school and the classroom where the volunteer will be working.
- Explain school policies and guidelines, including dress codes, discipline techniques for in and out of the classroom.
- Explain specific procedures for fire drills, dismissal, and special activities (assemblies, lunchroom, movies, etc.).
- Tour the physical plant and classroom layout (learning centers, storage, materials). Provide a map if one is available.
- If a school handbook is available, provide the volunteer with a copy and spend time discussing the contents.
- Establish a schedule of days, times, and areas that the volunteer will be working, also a procedure to follow if the volunteer can not be there at the designated time or if the teacher has a change in plans and does not require the services of the volunteer on a particular day.
- Discuss the expectations of the volunteer and the teacher as they relate to the goals and objectives of the volunteer program.

- Provide a background or history of what prompted the need for, and establishment of, a volunteer effort. (Individualized instruction, increased teacher-pupil ratio, district policy, federal program, etc.).

For further information refer to the *Information Packet* for Parent and Community Volunteers, found at the end of this chapter.

As in most phases of community involvement, the teacher is a key person to initiate, implement, and carry through the volunteer component. The teacher is also a primary motivator for the volunteers. This motivation is extremely important in initiating and sustaining volunteer assistance. Decker gave the following points to help keep motivation high thoughout the program:

1. Volunteers must not be taken for granted.
2. Time should be taken to discover a volunteer's strengths and weaknesses.
3. Volunteers must see the relationship of their job to the total effort and the importance of their contribution.
4. Volunteers work best in a friendly atmosphere where their efforts are obviously needed and appreciated.
5. Volunteers' work should be regularly assessed to make sure they are neighter overworked or underworked.
6. Volunteers should have as much encouragement and feedback as possible.
7. Volunteers need to be informed on the organization as a whole.
8. Volunteers need to be consulted and asked for ideas and suggestions.[7]

Because the teacher works closely with the volunteer, attention to these points will help maintain the motivation so necessary to the program.

Motivation is also stimulated when the volunteer is involved in the planning and setting of goals for the program. They want to feel an integral part of the program. Volunteers should have specific goals and a detailed plan of how to meet them. Nothing can discourage a volunteer more than to come into a classroom not knowing what to do and having no guidance in deciding what they are to do. Teachers need to periodically put themselves in the volunteers' position and keep the volunteer viewpoint in mind.

VOLUNTEER VIEWPOINT

If you want my loyalty, interests and bests efforts, remember that. . .

1. I need a SENSE OF BELONGING, a feeling that I am honestly needed for my total self, not just for my hands, nor because I take orders well.
2. I need to have a sense of sharing in planning our objectives. My need will be satisfied only when I feel that my ideas have had a fair hearing.
3. I need to feel that the goals and objectives arrived at are within reach and that they make sense to me.
4. I need to feel what I'm doing has real purpose or contributes to human welfare–that its value extends even beyond my personal gain, or hours.
5. I need to share in making the rules by which, together, we shall live and work toward our goals.
6. I need to know in some clear detail just what is expected of me–not only my detailed task but where I have opportunity to make personal and final decisions.
7. I need to have some responsibilities that challenge, that are within range of my abilities and interest, and that contribute toward reaching my assigned goal, and that cover all goals.
8. I need to see that progress is being made toward the goals we have set.
9. I need to be kept informed. What I'm not up on, I may be down on. (Keeping me informed is one way to give me status as an individual.)
10. I need to have confidence in my superiors–confidence based upon assurance of consistant fair treatment, or recognition when it is due, and trust that loyalty will bring increased security.[8]

Volunteers would be reluctant to express this viewpoint directly to the teacher, at least until a working relationship has been established. For this reason the teacher should be sensitive to these needs and should encourage volunteers to express their feelings openly.

Continued Training

Continued training should be based on the needs identified by the teacher following an assessment of the strengths of the volunteer. This training can be done on a one-to-one, small or

large group basis. If several volunteers are going to be working in specific subject areas, short training sessions on specific topics may be necessary. For example, math volunteers may require training in the use of cuisennaire rods, making simple math games, or the methods being used to teach math in that particular classroom Reading volunteers may need to be familiar with the materials used and the areas that need specific development (sight recognition, Dolch Words, word analysis, structural analysis, vocabulary development, comprehension, or study skills).

Group training can also be done in more general areas. A session on record keeping may be necessary if this task is to be performed by the volunteers. An area often overlooked, but the cause of potential problems, is handwriting. Most schools teach a specific method of writing with which the volunteers should be familiar, especially in the primary grades; and a mini-session on printing and cursive writing forms may be a valuable skill development experience for all involved. In addition, a demonstration of A-V equipment and office machines (ditto, stencil, laminator, primary typewriters, etc.), may give the volunteers additional skills that can relieve the teacher of time consuming, non-professional tasks. Other training, both specific and general, needs to be determined by the teacher and volunteer together. The more training a volunteer has, the more useful that volunteer will be.

Activities where volunteers can be involved are limited only by the imagination. As a stimulus to the imagination, a listing of some activities is included at the end of this chapter in the *Information Packet* for Parent and Community Volunteer Programs.

Recruitment

Usually at some point in a volunteer program, recruitment becomes a concern. Sometimes, in the initial stages of a volunteer program, teachers may be reluctant to open their classroom to outsiders. However, once teachers begin to see the benefits of volunteerism for students and themselves, requests for volunteer time increase dramatically. Sometimes, a teacher will start with a few volunteers and find more and more uses for their type of assistance. Recruiting may also be necessary after the planning and identification of needs has taken place. Whatever the reason, this increased use of volunteer assistance will necessitate the need for recruitment.

Before any recruitment effort begins, the teacher must be prepared to explain the objectives of the program and the reasons why volunteers are needed. A genuine desire for another person's assistance is essential in the recruitment phase. If a teacher does not genuinely believe in the potential of the individual volunteer, it will not take long for a parent or community member to become aware of the teacher's attitude toward the volunteer.

A teacher should have a place for the people that are recruited. It is discouraging for the person volunteering to be told, "Thank you, I'll call you soon." When a person volunteers, a time should be set to come in for orientation.

Recruitment Techniques

As many techniques as possible should be used to recruit. One is never enough. One of the best techniques is to use involved volunteers. They are usually excited by what they are doing and are more than willing to help recruit others.

Although teachers have a limited amount of time available to recruit directly, a teacher may be able to speak to service clubs and organizations. Whenever possible, the personal contact or request is usually very effective.

Teachers can also recruit in other ways. They can make, or have students make, posters and flyers requesting volunteer services. They can write short articles for the local newspaper or school newsletter and they can also involve their students in writing these news articles. Teachers can send

notes home to parents and discuss with their students the merits of having community members in the classroom. They can have other volunteers, students, or themselves tape Public Service Bulletins for the local radio station.

Another very useful recruiting strategy is the telephone tree. A teacher can start a telephone tree by making a list of all students' phone numbers and putting them on index cards. Existing volunteers should also be used if they are available since they are most likely to be enthusiastic about recruiting more people. From these sources a small number of key people can be recruited. These key people must be reliable and must understand the importance of their completing the assigned calls and that the chain depends on them. In the event a caller or volunteer is going to be out of town or unavailable for an extended period of time the key people should be notified and arrangements for a substitute made. A spot check down the line occasionally, to check the effectiveness of the tree, will indicate any changes that might be necessary.

The list of names can be divided up and three to eight people assigned to each key caller. It is sometimes helpful if the division is done geographically, so that transportation can be arranged if necessary. A chart showing the structure and telephone numbers should be distributed to all the participants. When using the telephone tree to recruit volunteers, the callers may also ask people to add names to the list, grandparents, neighbors, business acquaintances, friends, colleagues, teenagers, or anyone they think might be a potential volunteer.

The callers should be reminded to contact housewives before 3 p.m., they are less receptive when the children are home from school; employed persons in the early evening, most do not appreciate being called at work; and teens in the late afternoon or early evening.

In addition to being a useful recruiting technique, the telephone tree can be used to communicate emergency situations such as school closings; to communicate short messages regarding meetings; to notify parents of last minute changes in plans; and to activate large numbers people in a short amount of time.

Other recruiting techniques for the teacher to keep in mind are coffee klatches on weekends or vacations which involve neighbors and friends. Parent-teacher conferences are also excellent chances to discuss the volunteer program and generate interest from parents, both mothers and fathers. Senior citizens are often some of the best volunteers and every effort should be made to involve them.

When recruiting, it should be kept in mind that every person has something to offer. The young, old, middle aged, rich, poor, middle income, all ethnic groups, employed, unemployed, educated or uneducated should be contacted. The job is to match the skill with the need. The only limitation in recruiting is recruit only when there is a definite placement.

Volunteer Recognition

Another facet of a successful volunteer program is recognition. Everyone likes to know he is appreciated. People are more apt to continue volunteering when they receive recognition for their involvement. These acknowledgement efforts can keep morale high, aid in recruitment and become a positive public relations effort for the teacher and the school.

Recognition should be both formal and informal. The day to day recognition by a smile, a thank you, or similar comment is a necessity. But recognition also needs to be in other forms, such as:

- Appreciation nights
- Awards and honors (certificates, letters)
- Letters from the principal or superintendent
- Special expenses-paid travel

- Asking for advice of the volunteer (and following it)
- Pins and lapel buttons
- Volunteer of the month
- Appreciation teas, luncheons, banquets.

Evaluation

To insure success, an on-going evaluation process providing systematic feedback should be a part of the volunteer program. It needs to include periodic monitoring in the on-going process because volunteering does not always take place on a specific day or at specific times. It does not have to be an elaborate data gathering process, but it should provide enough information to identify problem areas or weaknesses in the program. A questionnaire or checklist filled out by teachers and volunteers, anonymously, can be an excellent indicator of how the program is progressing. The following questions can serve as a guide to developing a questionnaire with additional questions included that relate to the specific program being evaluated.

- Are you as a teacher/volunteer happy with what you're doing in the classroom?
- Do you feel the students are benefiting from the volunteer program?
- Are the goals and objectives established in the planning being met?
- Are volunteers receiving necessary training to be effective in the program?
- Is there a placement system that allows for change of assignment should a problem arise?
- Do you as a teacher/volunteer, feel there is an adequate exchange of ideas and input from each partner?
- Do you feel the program has led to greater community support?
- Has interaction between the teacher and the volunteer been mutually rewarding?
- Has the program given the teacher more time to devote to professional activities?
- Do you want to be involved in the program again?
- Do you feel that you have received adequate recognition for your efforts?
- Do you feel the program should be continued? Expanded?
- Do you have any specific suggestions for the improvement of the program?

If the answers to a questionnaire of this type are continually analyzed and assessed, problem areas can be identified before they become major detriments to the program. In addition, to the formal assessment process, informal comments and discussions should be taken into consideration in the evaluation.

Conclusion

A comprehensive district or system wide program provides the individual teacher with a larger pool of volunteers from which to draw as well as expertise in a wider range of specialized areas. The management of such a program usually requires a full time professional person, an advisory board, or a committee responsible for the administration of the program. The probability of expansion and success of the volunteer program is increased when a coordinator is hired to devote full time and energy to developing the volunteer program. Today the trend is to employ a professional person to coordinate the various elements necessary for successful experiences with teachers and volunteers.

The volunteer coordinator also acts as liaison between the administration, teachers, and volunteers. The coordinator relieves teachers of some of the responsibilities involved in the operation of the program, including communicating school policies to volunteers, ensuring that the program adheres to these policies, and maintaining regular contact with the volunteers. This person's role includes processing requests from teachers as well as assuming responsibility for other elements mentioned in this chapter, i. e., recruitment, continuing assessment and evaluation, record keeping, public relations, motivation, training and recognition.

If a volunteer program is not a school wide policy, the individual teacher does not need to give up the use of volunteers. The techniques described can be used by a teacher to establish a volunteer

program directed at that teacher's needs. The development of a successful model by one teacher is often the first step in the establishment of a volunteer program that grows into a school wide program.

The following list of Do's and Don'ts was prepared by the Lane County Juvenile Department, Eugene, Oregon for volunteers. They can be considered as general guidelines, a quick reference or a spot check for a classroom volunteer.

DO'S	DON'TS
1. Invite volunteers in to serve as partners.	1. Regard volunteers as an appendage to your program perhaps only to be tolerated.
2. Give them tasks which compliment the service of paid professional employees.	2. Use volunteers as a substitute for paid employees.
3. Clearly define for employees and volunteers, the differences in their tasks and roles.	3. Leave role definition vague so that staff and volunteers are anxious and uneasy about who has responsibility in which area.
4. Screen volunteers and accept only the ones who can contribute. At least check references and interview each candidate just as you would an employee.	4. Leave to chance whether a volunteer can be helpful. A volunteer who uses or takes advantage of children is dangerous to the welfare of the children involved and to the entire program.
5. Encourage your staff in examining your program to decide which tasks volunteers could perform.	5. Leave task identification entirely up to administrative personnel or volunteers themselves. Important services not being provided will be missed.
6. Demand a specific commitment of time and resources from volunteers. If possible invite a well functioning service group to come in to initiate the volunteer program under your supervision.	6. Be vague about what is expected in time and resources.
7. Provide an orientation program to acquaint volunteers with the department's functions, goals, and methods as well as nature of their task.	7. Put volunteers to work without knowing expectations, how to do the job, or how they fit into the total program.
8. Provide an on-going, regularly scheduled training program.	8. Allow volunteers to learn by trial and error only, function with a conflicting philosophy, or function in isolation from other volunteers and staff.
9. Provide supervision. This may be close initially with more independence allowed as competence is gained.	9. Allow volunteers to function entirely on their own. It is discouraging and they often know they are not helping.
10. Make assignments based upon diagnosed skills, knowledge, interests, capacity to learn, time available, and resources.	10. Over-use, under-use, or mis-use volunteers.
11. Give recognition. Volunteers appreciate realistic recognition as much as paid staff do.	11. Ignore the need for encouragement, expressions of appreciation. The need for it may be denied, but we really do appreciate their efforts.
12. Assign one employee responsibility for administering the volunteer program. This responsibility can be shared with volunteers as they become able.	12. Distribute responsibility for administration of volunteer services among several employees, especially at the outset.[9]

In addition, the following pages are designed to assist in implementing a classroom volunteer program. They are labeled "sheet #1, #2, etc." for the purpose of using and discussing them one at a time with parent and community volunteers. The information was compiled from the National Education Association resource kit, entitled "Teacher & Parents Together for the Benefit of Children." A filmstrip and cassette are also available with the kit.

FOOTNOTES

1. The Mott Institute for Community Improvement, *The Use of School Volunteers* (Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1973), p. 1.

2. Larry Winecoff and Conrad Powell, *Organizing a Volunteer Program* (Michigan: Pendell Publishing Co., 1976), p. 8.

3. Barbara Carter and Gloria Dapper, *School Volunteers: What They Do How They Do It* (New York: Citation Press, 1972), p. 15.

4. *Ibid.*, p.16.

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*

7. Larry E. Decker, *Volunteer Coordinator Guide* (Oregon: University of Oregon Center for Leisure Studies and Community Services, 1969), p. 26.

8. Harriet H. Naylor, *Volunteers Today: Finding, Training and Working with Them* (New York: Association Press, 1967), pp. 64-65.

9. Decker, *Volunteer Coordinator Guide*, pp. 41-42.

INFORMATION PACKET
Parent and Community Volunteer Packet

Information Compiled from
THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
(NEA)

Resource Kit Entitled:
Teachers & Parents Together for Kids

Sheet #1–The Trend Toward Community Involvement

The development of parent and community involvement programs may be seen as part of the trend away from the self-contained classroom where one teacher is responsible for the learning experience of one group of children. Educational factors contributing to this trend are:

A greater emphasis on individualized instruction.
Innovative programs developed through compensatory education practices.
The knowledge explosion.
An increase in team-teaching assignments.
The addition of paraprofessionals to the teaching staff.
Required parent participation in Head Start programs.
The development of school learning centers equipped with new technology.

Sheet #2–Some Possible Goals of the Program

To enlist and strengthen the cooperation of the parents in the education of their children.

To provide volunteer help to the classroom teacher to better meet the individual needs of children.

To develop an environment that encourages friendly two-way communication between home and school.

To develop a cooperative partnership between parent and teacher for the benefit of the child.

To give teachers more time for professional activities, making them more effective teachers and creating a more manageable teaching role.

To encourage experimentation with new techniques such as team teaching and with new learning materials, which might not be possible for the school without volunteer assistance.

To provide a continuous public relations feeder system from the school through the parents to the community to create greater understanding of educational needs and goals.

To allow parents to make a significant contribution to their children, their schools, and their community.

Sheet #3–Basic Qualifications for Volunteers

You should:

1. Like children and relate well to them.
2. Be able to work under the direction of school professionals.
3. Be interested in education and the community.
4. Feel a commitment to the goals of the parent volunteer program.
5. Want to help.
6. Be dependable and in good health.
7. Be willing to attend occasional inservice training sessions.

Sheet #4–Possible Activities for Volunteers

- Preparing art materials (mixing paints, cutting paper into different sizes and shapes).
- Supervising the "easel corner" and writing the names of children on the paper.
- Assisting with outdoor play activities.
- Supervising the classroom while the teacher works with a small group.
- Checking out reference materials.
- Assisting with audio-visual equipment.
- Guiding creative writing table activities.
- Helping to solve minor concerns before they develop into discipline problems.
- Helping children check their papers.
- Helping at the listening center.
- Writing autobiographies or stories which children dictate.
- Presenting drill games in mathematics, phonics, spelling, etc.
- Helping set up and handle science experiments.
- Reviewing work with pupils.
- Using manipulative objects with slow learners to demonstrate basic facts in mathematics.
- Helping at the manuscript handwriting table.
- Leading small group discussions.
- Serving as a parent-volunteer chairman to schedule other parents into the class or school program.
- Assisting the teacher on field trips with planning and supervising.
- Contacting parents by phone to inform them or to remind them of activities.
- Providing a one-to-one relationship for those children who need this ratio of adult assistance to experience success in school.
- Reading favorite books to small groups of children.
- Tutoring individual children when requested by the teacher.
- Assisting with special arts, holiday, or learning activities requiring additional art guidance.
- Arranging decorations or food for class parties.
- Organizing and maintaing the classroom library.
- Making or repairing books, posters, learning toys or games, activity cards, and boxes, and other materials for classroom use.
- Making graphs, charts, maps, flash cards, overhead transparencies, and similar items for classroom presentations.
- Recording filmstrip narrations, stories, and drills.
- Putting assignments or lessons on the board.
- Arranging bulletin boards and other displays; dismantling and filing materials for future use.

- Distributing books, school notices, and instructional materials.
- Adjusting heating or cooling, window shades, and lights in classroom as necessary.
- Helping move classroom furniture for special activities and return to original arrangement.
- Cleaning up art or science tables or other classroom work areas and boards, desks, tables, and storage areas.
- Assisting during kindergarten registration.
- Taking attendance and preparing attendance forms.
- Counting and packaging notices and forms for distribution to classrooms
- Serving on work crews to increase and make safer and more attractive the school playground equipment.
- Serving on committees and work groups to develop an outdoor classroom and conservation area on school property.
- Constructing portable bulletin boards, space dividers, shelving, carrels, and similar classroom furniture.
- Assisting with the summer recreational program.
- Coordinating a summer employment service for students.

Sheet #5–Basic Guidelines for Parent Volunteers

Respect school policies
Give children appropriate encouragement
Discipline is the teacher's responsibility
Follow education's code of ethics
Avoid evaluating children
Get to know the children
Give deserved praise
Provide motivation thru individual attention
Be consistent and objective
Be honest with children
Respect the child and his privacy
Be a good listener
Be an effective volunteer
Share ideas with the teacher
Be thoroughly prepared
Get the most out of your involvement
Maintain a sense of humor
Calm is best
Your attitude is important
Keep your commitment

Sheet # 6–Considering All the Viewpoints (doubts, fears, objections and problems)

PARENTS:

May fear the teacher because they recall their own unhappy experience in school.

May feel that the teacher does not appreciate the difficulties of parenthood and blames parents for the child's failure in school.

May feel that the teacher doesn't know how to handle their child.

May feel that the school does not spend enough time teaching the "Three R's."

May feel that the schools do not operate efficiently and that the taxpayers' money is wasted on frills.

May feel that the schools encourage a lack of discipline.

May feel that they may not be able to do anything worth-while to help the children.

May feel that it is the job of the school to educate the child and to provide for his well-being during the school hours.

May not approve of changes in the present school system and fear that parents in the classroom will disrupt the instructional program. They feel that their place is in the home just as the teacher's is in the classroom.

May have younger children who are not in school; may lack transportation; may be too busy in the home; may be employed during school hours.

Teachers may fear that parents will:

Recognize problem children at school and may add to their problem by making the community aware of school behavior.
Compare professional and personal qualities of staff members.
Take up too much of their time.
Create confusion in the instructional program. Be critical of teachers.
Increase already overwhelming responsibilities.
Share confidential information acquired at school.
Try to take over teaching responsibilities.
Fail to keep their commitments, creating scheduling difficulties.
Not follow a teacher's instructions or the school's regulations.
Not know how to work productively with children.
Use non-standard English or demonstrate other characteristics which the teacher does not want to introduce into a learning situation.

Other possible teacher fears:

They will not be able to establish a working relationship with the parents.
They will not be able to teach with other adults in the classroom.
They will not be able to get along with all the parents.
The use of parents in instructional activities may lower the school's or the teacher's educational standards.
The use of parent volunteers may mean that the school system will hire fewer certified teachers than are really needed.

Sheet #7—Benefits and Rewards

To Parents:

Sharing with their children
Learning more about their educational system
Contributing to the community

To the School:

Obtaining skills and services which might not otherwise be available due to financial limitations.

To Teachers:

Having more time to devote to the professional aspects of teaching.
Being able to learn more about the individual children.

In addition, previously reticent teachers have discovered that a number of parents:

Have worthy ideas for enriching the instructional program
Have excellent ideas for presenting instructional materials and for clarifying concepts.
Extend the school learnings into home activities.
Are eager to learn, and they do; they learn from the teacher, the children, and from each other.
Are good teachers. The children, the teachers, and other parents profit from their participation.

Sheet #8–Application Forms

I would be interested in participating in the Parent and Community Volunteer Program.

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Activities I am interested in:

_____

_____

_____

_____

I would be interested in participating in the Parent and Community Volunteer Program.

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Activities I am interested in:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Utilizing Community Resources In and Out of the Classroom

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This chapter discusses some of the possible ways for the teacher to involve the community in the classroom through utilizing geographic and other community resources.

Many people ask, why use community resources in school? To the rationale previously presented concerning community involvement, Gladys Dillon, In-Service Director, Flint Community Schools, added that the use of community resources:

- Gives what goes on in school closer relationship with actual life situations, needs, and problems.
- Develops the kinds of interest in school work that impels (rather than compels) children to come to school.
- Clarifies teaching and learning by making use of concrete, first-hand illustration and demonstration.
- Provides experience in planning, in problem-solving, and in critical group thinking.
- Develops power of observation, of asking questions, of searching out information, of seeing relationships.
- Places knowledge and skills in the context of functional learning; i. e., learning to use by doing.
- Brings related learnings together and uses them together in meeting problems and situations.
- Provides for a combination of common learnings and adjustment to problems and situations, differences in needs, abilities, and interests.
- Places emphasis upon achieving good human relations and practicing them.
- Increases opportunities for understanding and practicing the responsibilities involved in community citizenship.[1]

The community is rich with resources which assist the teacher. The community can be used as a laboratory and as a supplement to classroom teaching. Some of the potential uses of community involvement activities include: gaining greater knowledge of community resources and social agencies; making use of the known resources which offer their services or materials free of charge; finding new ideas for presenting subject matter; developing workable projects for classroom presentation; acquiring awareness of job opportunities, technical and vocational, in the community and providing students with this information; giving residents of the area an opportunity to become acquainted with the goals and aims of the schools; and establishing a bibliography of resource materials for use in the classroom.

In addition to establishing a classroom level bibliography, faculty members may be involved in a cooperative effort to identify, utilize, and evaluate community resources. The resulting building level and/or system-wide resource file would be a master file of information available to all school personnel. It would include as many geographic and other community resources as possible to be used as learning experiences for children. The resource file could be categorized by field trip sites; short term volunteers; drivers; speakers; special interests, talents or hobbies; demonstrations, etc. and alphabetized for easy reference. A periodic update of the master file would be disseminated to all faculty members ensuring them of the latest available information.

Whenever possible, the master file should be coordinated with the volunteer program. The volunteer coordinator would process resource requests from teachers, identify the possible resources available to meet the need expressed in the request, and aid in the selection. The coordinator would also be responsible for making necessary arrangements, i. e., for a visitor to the classroom, A/V equipment, transportation, materials, and visits outside the classroom.

Before a teacher can effectively use the geographic or other community resources as learning experiences, the teacher must know that particular community well. Many teachers do not live in the community where they teach and consequently, often need to make special efforts to learn about the school community. For this reason, a survey "Getting Acquainted with Your School Community" is included at the end of this chapter. This survey will assist the teacher in learning about and analyzing the community surrounding the school.

The first step in utilizing community resources is to become familiar with the school community. As part of getting to know this community, the identification of agencies is essential. Because time limitations make it difficult for a teacher to learn about local agencies, one useful method for increasing the opportunity to know others working in the community is for the principal to invite people from local agencies to give brief presentations at selected staff meetings throughout the school year. This method provides first hand knowledge of the various local agencies and personnel, including local businessmen and people from industry. These presentations also assist the teacher in identifying people to invite into the classroom to interact with students.

In selecting which community resources to use to provide learning experiences, it is helpful to examine the potential use of each in terms of the resulting experience. Students should be involved in the planning, selection and evaluation process. One set of criteria to apply to the potential use of a resource is to answer the following questions positively.

Is the resource. . .

- Known well enough by the teacher to ensure adequate preplanning and preparation?
- Usable effectively within the time that can be made available for it?
- Located where suitable travel arrangements can be made?

Is the resulting experience . . .

- A natural outgrowth of the learning experiences under way or to be initiated in the near future?
- Likely to lead to other activities and experiences of value to the students, i. e., oral and written reports, dramatization, expression through art media or music, constructive activities, reading or research, graphic displays, bulletin boards, etc. ?
- Suited to the abilities and interests of the age group involved?
- Designed to show specific aspects of community life and relationships in community life?
- Amenable to formulation of specific learning objectives and anticipation of the contributions that can be made to them?
- Planned in relation to previously acquired information and skills, or to illustrate them, or to stimulate interest in new information and skills?
- Of enough value to justify taking school time, devoting the time and activity of teachers and pupils required, and working out all the adjustments involved?

Even though the potential to be tapped in any given community is unlimited, the selection of a field trip or visitor to the classroom is often limited to the old standbys. The following suggestions to expand the parameters of the classroom fall into four general categories: Individuals, Geographic, Business and Agency and are adapted from a list presented by Liebertz for classroom teachers.[2]

Parents are one of the most valuable, most available and most often under-utilized community resources. Other non-parent patrons of the district also offer a wide range of expertise to be tapped for use in the classroom. Senior citizens possess a wide variety of experience and expertise as well as a great amount of free time and they should not be overlooked. Students often know who in the neighborhood possesses hobbies or skills that might be used to demonstrate cultural diversity or the arts of different countries.

Visiting professionals can provide lessons in health, law, planning, and other areas of study in the classroom. In addition, many colleges and universities give students course credit for participation in volunteer programs. Several courts around the country have also developed community service projects for minor court offenders, instead of assessing fines.

Many civic organizations (Kiwanis, Jaycees, Lyons, Rotary, Business and Professional Women, etc.) are willing to sponsor volunteers for classroom activities. A phone call to a community's local club president will provide the necessary information. In addition many communities have Voluntary Action Centers that provide volunteer services and refer volunteers.

Many teachers are so involved with curriculum development and classroom activities that they fail to take advantage of the geographical resources that can be found in most areas to supplement classroom instruction:

Parks and recreation areas
Fire and polic stations
Rivers and streams
Neighbor's houses and yards
Sewage and water treatment Plants
Garbage dumps and auto wreckers
Museums and libraries
Stores and restaurants
Zoos and game preserves
Construction sites and vacant lots
Farms and ranches
Dairies and orchards
Hospitals
Fish farms and nurseries
Colleges or universities
Military bases or offices
Banks and savings institutions
Animal shelters and meat packing plants
Depots and terminals
Senior citizen and youth centers
Factories and mills
Churches and shrines
Forests and deserts
Beaches and mountains
Lakes and dams
Quarries and gravel pits

Examples of the use of three resources: neighbors, restaurants, and vacant lots are presented at the end of this chapter in detail. They are excerpts from a publication entitled *Yellow Pages of Learning Resources.* Each example provides a detailed illustration of what can be learned at these three sites.

Another valuable resource is the business community which can provide both volunteers and donations for use in the classroom as well as being field trip sites. The following examples illustrate the wide variety of resources offered by the business community. Grocery stores and supermarkets might donate food for special events or boxes for building projects; lumber mills might donate scraps for building blocks. Department stores might donate small gifts for carnivals or fund raising events. Carpet stores, stationery stores, mills or factories might donate scraps for special projects. Car dealerships might offer brochures for use in consumer studies. Specialized stores might exhibit their collections from different cultures or countries. Banks might provide materials for setting up classroom banking systems or studying economics. Wallpaper stores might donate excess paper for drawing. Pet shops might be persuaded to "lend" pets to classrooms for a week or two, as well as explain pet care. Book stores, magazine stands, or libraries might donate out of date books for children to read or cut up. Air conditioning stores might provide free science demonstrations on how air conditioning works. Sporting goods stores might make free movies available on safety tips in physical education activities. Motorcycle shops might bring in a motorcycle to demonstrate the differences in centimeters for a math lesson. Delicatessen operators might provide samples of foods from different countries and explain them. Photography studios might give free demonstrations and take class pictures. Stereo stores might explain to science classes how electricity works in stereos.

The utilization of public agencies as resources for the classroom is an often neglected area. However, these agencies may be one of the most valuable resources to the teacher. The following list gives an indication of the kinds of services these agencies might provide:

- County Extension–This organization has ready made lesson plans in science, health, building, sewing, and other areas that a teacher can use in the classroom.
- City and County Government–There are many unique personnel and facility resources in local government.
- Parks and Recreation Departments–These departments have many resources that are not normally used during the school day.
- County Health Organizations–These organizations might provide cooking materials and dental supplies.
- Children's Services Division–Division personnel have expertise in "child-parent communication" that a teacher might want to use.
- Red Cross–This agency has first aid materials and can demonstrate first aid techniques.
- Civil Air Patrol–This group develops youth groups and has educational materials on flying.
- National Guard–This organization may provide free transportation for field trips or volunteers for special projects.
- Local Churches–Churches have facilities and people that could be utilized in the classroom.
- American Cancer Society–Provides free cancer-related educational materials for children and their parents.
- Public Welfare–Its representatives might come to talk about the people living in the community and problems of the unemployed.

The community can become an integral part of the school curriculum. But occasionally teachers are hesitant to initiate utilizing community resources because they are unsure of how to relate community involvement activities to various curricular areas. The following examples are provided to help the teacher incorporate the community into the curriculum:

Language Arts

- A community-wide book fair to encourage reading and the use of books.
- Students meeting periodically in the home of a Spanish-speaking family for purposes of conversational Spanish and examining another culture.
- The public library promotes a greater use of its books and media to encourage and establish habits toward a continuing practice of self-inquiry.

Science

- Parents and students develop a basement laboratory to supplement and encourage learning about the sciences.
- Students and teachers regularly visit local chemical, electrical and other science-related industries to examine the application of science principles and techniques.
- Scientists, engineers, and medical professionals visit the classrooms to describe their professions and to teach certain parts of the science subjects.
- Parents and students plan and carry out some local ecology project. The students receive school credit and/or time off to complete the projects.

Music and Art

- Parents and students are encouraged to participate together in community bands, choirs, or art classes to create a greater interest in, and appreciation for, music or art.
- Students, parents, and teacher attend community concerts or art shows together to enhance an interest in music or art.

Health and Safety

- Family life-study courses are developed for parents to help them better understand how to reinforce education and learning in the home.
- A community campaign on safe driving is organized jointly by parents and students.
- Parents assist with the sight and hearing examinations of students to better understand various student health needs.

Social Studies

- A course centered on "Understanding Our Community" is developed for joint participation by parents and students to help them learn how the community and school both educate people.

- A teen traffic court is established to give students some practical knowledge and experience with court procedures.

Homemaking

- A program on family life and human relationship is sponsored by the community council of churches. The program participants are engaged or young married couples and the resource personnel are various church and school professionals.
- A breakfast program for low-income students is implemented by homemaking students and parents.
- Clothing selection and construction and/or food and nutrition projects for both students and parents are organized and administered by the homemaking class and instructors.[3]

The Field Trip

A facet of utilizing community resources is the field trip. Many teachers take their classes on field trips and have done so for years. The idea of the field trip is not new, but often the full educational potential is not realized. The trip should be designed to make it a relevant, interesting link between classroom instruction and life situations. Any field trip requires careful planning, execution and follow up to fulfill its potential as a learning experience. The following information related to field trips has been adapted from materials used for in-service in the Flint, Michigan Public Schools. This information can serve as a reference guide for teacher, students, administrators and parents.

The advantages of a field trip are many and should be considered carefully by all teachers. The field trip tends to blend school life with the outside world, putting children in direct touch, under learning conditions, with things, persons, environments, occupations and trends. It involves the consideration and solution of problems arising from individual and group participation in natural social situations. It affords opportunities to develop keenness and accuracy of observation, as well as helping children to organize new information in relation to their experience. The trip develops initiative and self activity, making pupils active agents rather than passive recipients and provides valuable correlation of subjects. It affords an opportunity to practice democracy by taking part in group discussions; distinguishing facts from opinions; listening to what other persons have to say; and discussing important problems.

Field Trip Objectives

The teacher should have objectives for each field trip. The following general objectives are applicable to most field trips; however, specific objectives related to the particular site should also be determined. The general objectives of a field trip are:

- To provide first-hand observation and new information.
- To stimulate interest in a topic.
- To broaden the background of experience for students and provide new vistas.
- To provide common experiences for a group.
- To make use of available reference materials.
- To provide experience in planning.
- To enable the teacher to observe behavior in new situations.
- To build group morale.
- To provide social experiences for learning social skills.
- To study a unit.
- To arouse interest and curiosity of the students (motivation for people).

Planning

The success of the field trip depends heavily on careful planning and preparation. The teacher should involve the students in the planning whenever possible as well as consulting parents and administrators. Some of the topics to be discussed in planning field trips are:

- The resources to be visited that would have the most value under study.
- Questions which would be answered while on the field trip.
- Notes to be taken and points of interest to be noted while on the trip.
- The proper attire to be worn on the trip.
- Good manners and acceptable conduct.
- Precautionary measures.
- Intelligent questions to be asked while at the site.
- Directions on what to do if it is necessary to leave the group for any reason.
- The adults who will accompany the group on the trip.
- The explanation that will be sent home regarding the value of the trip.

Preparation

The following checklist includes a sample of the kinds of preparation that is essential for a field trip:

- Clearance with parents and administrators. This usually involves permission slips from parents. (A sample form can be found at the end of this chapter.)
- Other forms. Some businesses and industries may require certain forms to be filled out before the expedition.
- Insurance for long trips. The school may provide this.
- Visit by the teacher in advance if at all possible.
- Safety precautions. A first-aid kit should always be available.
- Directions about what to do if people get lost or are left behind.
- Clearance with other teachers, especially if the trips involve more than a day. A teacher may want to give up homework in class for a time or two to make up for the time lost in other classes. Work out some equitable arrangement with other teachers.
- Means of transportation and money involved.
- Provisions for eating. In some cases some extra food or money may need to be taken for the person who has forgotten this little item.
- Certainty that no one will be segregated for any reason.
- Plans to take other teachers or parents along.
- Calculation of time. Remember that groups do not move as fast as individuals.
- Ideas on what to look for, notes to take, materials to obtain.
- Possible arrangements for students who cannot afford or should not go on the trip.

At the end of this chapter is an example of a Field Trip Data Sheet. The Field Trip Data Sheet provides the necessary information on each site to be visited and should be filled out well in advance of the trip. In addition, a list of all children's addresses and telephone numbers should be taken by the teacher.

Policy and Procedure

Districts' policy and procedures vary according to legal responsibilities of the Board of Education, or those that are imposed by a particular state. There are some general legal considerations that are true in most districts and that can cause potential problems if the teacher is unaware of them.

A parental permission slip is usually required by school administration (an example of a permission slip may be found at the end of this chapter). The permission slip must be signed by a parent or guardian of each child before leaving the school for any type of field trip. Permission may be secured in one of two ways, a blanket permission slip signed for the entire year or one signed for each trip.

It should be noted that the permission slip is not a waiver of school responsibility. No parent can sign away a minor's right to have suit brought in his name should occasion warrant. The value of the parental consent slip lies solely in the documentary evidence that the parent knew and approved of the activity in question and thereby assumed for the child the ordinary risk inherent in such activity. Because of their possible legal significance, all parental slips should be kept for some time.

Field trips have more inherent possibilities of danger than the average classroom activities; therefore, teachers must be alert to these dangers when planning and taking field trips. A teacher's responsibility is not reduced on a field trip. Teachers, while teaching or supervising classes, are liable for negligence. Teachers must care for children with the same degree of caution that careful parents would show toward their own children.

Many school districts have specific procedures outlined for field trips which each teacher should be aware of. The following is the procedure outline used in Flint, Michigan Public Schools:

1. The school principal shall:
   a. Approve in advance all field trips.
   b. Submit in writing to the Coordinator, Educational Services Branch, the following information 24 hours in advance every scheduled field trip.
      1. Purpose of the field trip.
      2. Name of staff member in charge.
      3. Number of pupils involved.
      4. Destination of field trip.
      5. Time of day trip is scheduled.
      6. Mode of transportation.
2. The staff member in charge of the field trip will:
   a. Secure approval of school principal in advance.
   b. Obtain written parental permission for all pupils scheduled for the trip.
   c. Be responsible for all arrangements. (No delegation.)
   d. Be responsible for all reasonable safety precautions.
   e. Be responsible for obtaining adequate supervision.
   f. Be responsible for complying with the adopted policy covering field trips.
3. The following modes of transportation may be utilized:
   a. Walking (to resources close to the school).
   b. Common carriers (Planetarium, Art Center, etc.)
   c. Private car–staff (Official school-sponsored program such as field day, golf, etc.) No Board coverage.
   d. Private car–Parents (Official school-sponsored program such as field day).
4. Insurance
   a. When additional safety precautions are indicated, pupils can be insured under Protectrip Insurance (or local equivalent). When using this plan, the following procedure *must* be followed:
      1. Notify the Coordinator, Educational Services in writing 24 hours in advance of the trip. (This is imperative to receive insurance protection.)
      2. State time and destination of trip scheduled.
      3. Collect in advance $ ____ from each pupil wishing the insurance for each day or any portion of the day scheduled for the trip.
      4. Deliver or send by *check* to the Coordinator, Educational Services the insurance money collected in advance of the trip. (Do not send money through the school mail.)
      5. Deliver or send to the Coordinator, Educational Services a list of children to be covered, with their residence addresses and telephone numbers.

b. When common carrier is used, the pupils are covered by the carrier's insurance only while in the bus. Additional safety precautions may be desirable. Pupils may secure additional protection to cover them during the entire field trip time under the Protectrip plan.

c. School staff and parents using their private automobiles to transport pupils should be encouraged by the principal to carry maximum liability insurance ($100,000/$300,000) and maximum medical coverage for their passengers. (For the small additional premium, many persons carry this amount as a safety precaution.) The Board of Education cannot legally assume this liability. The car owner must provide for his own protection. (Local coverage should be substituted.)[4]

Follow-Up and Evaluation

Every trip should have some type of follow up. The type will vary according to the nature and purpose of the trip. Occasionally no immediate follow up is necessary if assigning essays, reaction papers or collecting notes will detract from the experience. On other occasions follow-up including diaries, photos, bulletin boards, articles in the school and/or town newspaper and thank you notes will enhance the trip. Discussions, at appropriate times, of various features of the trip are often an exciting dimension of the follow up.

The final step in executing the field trip is to evaluate the activity as a learning experience and determine whether this trip should be repeated in the future. An anonymous checklist on the values of the trip can be both an evaluation and a useful follow-up device.

The following is an example of questions which can help the students and teacher evaluate the effectiveness of the trip:

- Did you see something that could be used in the classroom?
- What grade or grade levels could it be used for? Was it appropriate for your grade level?
- What subject areas were covered?
- Was the community resource preparation for the trip adequate?
- Was there a briefing before the tour?
- Did they have adequate question and answer periods?
- Were there enough guides provided?
- Were the guides well enough informed?
- Will the community resource supply audio-visual aids and written materials to be used in the classroom?
- Can a specific subject or unit or work be correlated with what you saw?
- Would a resource person come to the classroom?
- What about the ability to hear during the tour?
- How can the information gained and the things seen on the tour be used in the classroom?
- Was the pre-planning adequate?
- Did you enjoy the trip?
- Should this resource be visited again?

These questions are intended to serve as a guide for the teacher in developing an instrument that satisfies the individual expectations and requirements of a field trip. Another example of an evaluation form can be found at the end of this chapter.

Conclusion

Because community life continues to become more complex and more interrelated, it is increasingly important that the teacher assumes responsibility to help each student to understand daily surroundings. Communities vary greatly, sociologically, economically, and culturally. Teachers need to be alert to the type of community in which the students live because to a large extent, the type of community should relate to both the activities and content of what is taught in the classroom

The use of community resources in and out of the classroom is limited only by the imagination of the teacher. The following survey is a self-assessment of community interest and involvement. If filled out every few months, a teacher is able to analyze the existing situation and follow the personal increase or decrease in utilizing community resources in the classroom, in personal involvement relationships with school and community, as well as in personal awareness of the environment of the students outside the classroom.

Assessment of Your Community Interest/Involvement

1. How many home visits during the past school year have you made?
2. How many board meetings have you attended?
3. How many field trips have you taken this past school year? How many are planned?
4. Do you know the concerns of the low income parents of your students?
5. Does your school have a community education program? Who is the Community Coordinator? Have you met this person?
6. What kind of employment are most of the parents of your students engaged in?
7. Have you had conferences with the parents of all your students?
8. Have you had conferences with the parents to discuss various ways they can help their child's achievement at home?
9. Does your school have a PTA? How many meetings have you attended?
10. How many telephone calls to parents have you made in the last school year?
11. How many letters or notes have you exchanged with parents?
12. How many parents or community members have been in your classroom this past year? How many are scheduled?
13. What do your students do for recreation or cultural activities when not in school?
14. Have you had contact with the case workers that are involved with your students? Do you know who they are?
15. Have you invited parents to volunteer in your classroom?
16. What is the enrollment of your school? Is it rising or declining?
17. How many *new* field trip sites have you identified?
18. How many *new* resource people have you invited to your classroom?

FOOTNOTES

1. Gladys Dillion, "Why Use Community Resources in School?" Flint, Michigan. (Mimeographed.)

2. William ("Skip") Liebertz, *Conference Report: Community Schools and Classroom Teachers* (Oregon: University of Oregon, 1975).

3. Fred Totten and Frank J. Manley, *The Community Education Concept and Nature and Function of the Community School,* Unit 101 (Flint, Michigan: W. Fred Totten, 1810 Ramsey Boulevard, 1970) as cited by Roger Heimstra, *The Educative Community* (Lincoln, Nebraska: Professional Educations Publication, Inc., 1972), p. 29.

4. Gladys Dillion, "Procedures for Scheduled Field Trips in Flint Public Schools," Flint, Michigan. (Mimeographed.)

Getting Acquainted with Your School Community

1. What are the school boundary lines?
2. What kinds of homes are most predominate?
3. Are there any hotels or motels? If yes, how many? Describe.
4. Are there trailer parks? If yes, how many? Describe.
5. Are there musical, dance, or theater groups? What kind? How many?
6. Is there a Senior Citizens group?
7. What are the predominate topographical features?
8. What is the current population?
9. What are the major zoning regulations?
10. How many schools are in the district? Private? Public?
11. Are there housing developments? What kind? Describe.
12. What different kinds of stores are there?
13. Is there a shopping center? What stores or other businesses are included? How many are chain? How many are locally owned?
14. How is the merchandise delivered? Handled? Displayed?
15. Are there any open fruit markets?
16. Is there a fire station?
17. Is there a postal station?
18. How many gasoline stations?
19. Is there a river or lake in the community?
20. Is there a hospital in the community?
21. How many doctors in the community? How many MD's, DO's, others?
22. Are there any clinics? What kinds?
23. Are there any parks and playgrounds? How many? Name. What facilities do they provide?
24. What proportion of the property is locally owned?
25. How many newspapers in the community?
26. What other entertainment and amusement places are there in the community?
27. Are there any factories? What kinds?
28. How many churches are there? What kinds are they? Is one church more influential than the others?
29. Is there a library?
30. What new construction projects are underway?
31. How many restaurants? What kinds?
32. What radio stations, T.V. stations, other mass media are located in the community?
33. What professional and civic groups are in the community? What does the community do for the youngsters and citizens of the community?
34. What transportation facilities are available?
35. Is there a Cooperative Extension Service in your district?
36. Who is the Mayor?
37. Who is the PTA President?
38. Who is the Superintendent of Schools?
39. How many school board members are there? Who are they?

This list is not complete and in searching for the answers to these questions, other information not requested will be found. For future reference, notes should be taken on all information gleaned from this exercise.

Excerpts from *Yellow Pages of Learning Resources*
edited by Richard Saul Wurman
The MIT Press (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)
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What Can You Learn from Your Next-Door Neighbor?

The genius of the United States is not the best or most in its executives or legislators, not even in its newspapers or inventors. . . but always most in the common people. –Walt Whitman.

We've included your next-door neighbor as a learning resource to remind you again not to overlook the most obvious opportunities. You can learn something from everybody. Ask questions, and become a good listener. There's a delicate balance between learning and being nosey–some people may be sensitive to certain questions. Use your judgment but use your curiosity as well. As Dorothy Parker once wrote, "People are more fun than anybody."

Here are some questions to start with:

Where did you grow up?
Where did you go to school?
What did you study?
What are your favorite memories of growing up?
How did you learn the things you know?

What do you do for a living?
Where did you learn to do it?
How did you decide to do this kind of work?
What skills does it take to do your job well?
What kinds of people do you work with?

What interests do you have?
How do you spend your vacations?
Have you ever traveled anywhere interesting?
What was it like there?
If you were in the service, what did you do, and what was it like?
What do you do for entertainment?
What are your plans for the future?
If you could have any wish, what would you wish for?
What would you most like to see changed about the world?

Although we usually think of neighbors as people, places and processes near you also act as neighbors and are valuable learning resources, too.

What Can You Learn at a Vacant Lot?

Most cities have many vacant lots. Invariably, they stick out like missing teeth in a block of otherwise good housing. People complain about the hazards and the ugliness, and most of the time nothing gets done. But vacant lots, liabilities though they may seem at first, can easily be converted into assets. There are several things you can do with them:

Learn from a vacant lot as if you were an archaeologist. How did the lot become vacant? Did it ever have a building on it? If it was never built upon, can you figure out why it was an undesirable lot for construction? What kinds of junk and debris have piled up? What can you learn from the junk and trash that have collected in the lot? Why has this material collected here? What could you reconstruct about the culture of the people on the property? Can you find out who owns the property by going to City Hall and consulting the deed records?

Clean up a vacant lot as a service to your neighborhood. Call City Hall and find out how you can help in cleaning up the lot. Start with the City Planning Commission or Board; next ask the Health Department. Can the city require the owner to clean up the lot, or will the city undertake the task itself? If worse comes to worst, find out if the city will cart away the debris if you and your friends agree to clean it up. Get a group of people together to help you.

Make a vacant lot into a useful space for your community. There are many governmental programs available to improve vacant lots throughout the city. Call City Hall and consult the City Planning Department or the Redevelopment Agency. Money is sometimes available to convert vacant lots into new housing, playgrounds, parking lots, or parks. Find out if your city has such funds available. Even if there is no money through a governmental program, see if you can get the owner to dedicate the land for community use (even temporarily). Often you will be able to get people to donate materials to fix the lot up. Or you can employ ingenuity to convert inexpensive

or unwanted materials into outdoor equipment. For example, old telephone company wire spools, telephone poles, and railroad ties make great playground equipment. Maybe neighbors will contribute their time or money.

Use a vacant lot as an added amenity in your neighborhood—a sort of neighborhood commons. Play there, wash cars there, meet friends there, put up basketball hoops, grow vegetables, have block parties, plant trees and flowers, put up fences, provide benches, make a neighborhood bulletin board. However, obtain the permission of the owner before doing anything; otherwise, you will be trespassing.

If you should decide to do any of these things, you will have learned a great deal. Do not overlook the lesson; stop and think about what you've learned about how you can understand and change your environment. If you decide to do nothing about the vacant lots that bother you, you will also have learned an important lesson about why nothing happens to make our cities better places: It is often because people like yourself don't have the time or don't care enough to make things happen.

What Can You Learn at a Restaurant?

Have you ever taken a good look around a restaurant and tried to estimate the amount of food being consumed at any given time? If this quantity seems colossal, just multiply it by the number of restaurants in your city, the country, the world, and the hours of the day, and you should have some idea of the vastness of the restaurant business.

The best way to learn about the restaurant business is to take a summer job as a cashier, waiter or waitress, busboy, cook, or dishwasher. Many restaurants, especially those located in tourist areas, need extra help in the summer and are glad to hire energetic young people. Restaurants attached to hotels probably also need extra help in the summer; see "Hotel" in this book to learn about other kinds of services based on tourist trade.

Who orders the food for the restaurant and how does he know what and how much will be required? How is food labeled, inventoried, and stored? (How do the answers to these questions compare with the information given by the truck driver in "Food Distribution Center" in this book?) What does the manager do if he runs out of an item on the menu? What does he do if he has a surplus of something?

The chef is another person with a lot of responsibilities and a lot of worries. What does he think would be the worst disaster that could occur in his kitchen? What if one of his reliable recipes unaccountably fails? How far in advance does the chef start preparing? His pots are probably the largest you have ever seen. Where does he get them? What about his electrical appliances? Are they like those in your home? Find out what led him into the field and where he learned his trade. Did you catch what he said about the highly touted French chefs?

Discover the world of the waiter or waitress—the cast of customers, their tipping habits, the tired feet and back, the power of a union. As you deal with the maitre d', you learn to appreciate his power to confer good and bad table locations and to orchestrate the movements of the patrons and staff. At the same time, you admire the bartender who can mix any drink ordered and you realize that his long bar makes the difference between high and low profits for the restaurant each day. And, with the owner, you have learned to worry when business is slow.

On a slow day, flatter the owner by asking about how he got started. Was it a family legacy or was it KP in the army? What promoted him to buy at the time and location that he did? How do he and the chef decide what to serve? What determines price? In what quantities does he buy silver and tableware? What problems does he have with the laundry service for cloths and linen napkins? Is he dreading the next time he has to lock horns with the union? Has he ever had a food poisoning scare? How does he make sure the health department requirements are met?

If the restaurant has a wine cellar, visit it with the wine steward and ask him about the number of bottles, the age of the oldest bottle, and the grade and kinds of wine he keeps stocked for the clientele of this restaurant.

PARENTAL PERMISSION SLIP

_____ School

Date _____

Dear Parents:

The group of which your child is a member is planning a school trip to _____ as part of their regular class work. The group will leave from _____ about _____, _____ and will be under the same careful teacher supervision which your child has while at school. In order for your child to make this trip it will be necessary to have your approval. You may express your approval by signing the slip below and returning it to the teacher.

_____
Teacher

_____
Principal

I give permission for my child, _____ to take the trip to _____ knowing that every precaution will be taken for his safety and well being.

_____ _____

Date Parent or guardian

FIELD TRIP DATA SHEET

I. Identification Data

A. Classification _____

B. Name of Resource _____

C. Address _____

D. Phone _____ Date _____

II. Instructions

A. Person to contact _____

B. Amount of advance notice needed _____

C. Resource group time: (1) Time of year _____
(2) Time of week _____ (3) Time of day _____

D. Resource group preference
1. Boys Girls Both
2. Size of group _____
3. Age or grade level _____
4. Pupil-adult ratio _____

E. Miscellaneous
1. Time required for visit _____
2. Safety precautions _____
3. Parking area _____
4. Lunch facilities _____

III. Field Trip Data

A. Process activities to be observed _____
_____

B. Are individuals available for guides? _____

IV. Related Activities

A. Materials available for distribution _____
_____

B. Resources, personnel for visiting school _____
_____

C. Person to contact for materials and personnel visits _____
_____

V. Comments

EVALUATION SHEET

Place visited _____ Date _____

1. Overall evaluation of tour:

( ) Excellent ( ) Very Good ( ) Fair ( ) Bad

Comments _____

_____

_____

2. This trip would promote valuable understanding of community:

( ) Yes ( ) No

Comments _____

_____

_____

3. This tour would be of value to:

( ) Teachers ( ) Children ( ) Both

4. This tour would be used for _____ subject areas.

5. Teacher materials available for classroom use:

( ) Filmstrips ( ) Movies ( ) Publications ( ) Resource people
( ) Exhibits

6. Physical characteristics of tour:

Briefing _____

Informed guides _____

Sufficient guides _____

Rest periods _____

Question and answer periods _____

Home Visitations

by Anthony J. DeLellis
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It is interesting that many professional educators spend a great portion of their professional lives attempting to serve a clientele about which they may have only passing knowledge. They attempt to foster major changes in their students through their efforts at school and may spend countless hours of their own time in developing innovations designed to enhance their practice as teachers. In recent years teachers have become more aware, however, that schools are not necessarily the most significant influences in the lives of our students, that the power of the educational institutions is not nearly as great as they had once believed. Thus, the influence of their efforts has to be reevaluated.

It has become apparent that the educational process consists of four major contributors, and that schools or teachers cannot claim to be the most influential. Parents, the community, the students' peers, and teachers are the main contributors to the student's educational process (Hiemstra: 1972). Professional teachers need to take this into account when attempting to design curriculum, cope with behavior problems, or provide motivation.

However, to recognize that students' parents and communities educate them along with their schools and their peers is not sufficient. Such insights have been available to teachers for many years and have been documented so often that the reports cease to excite the imagination as they once did. Yet, for the most part, teachers have not generally behaved as if they were aware of the insights. A number of reasons could account for this lack of response but the fact still remains that teachers spend very little time, in a professional capacity, in the primary environments of their students, the community and the home.

The question then is not, "Why visit the home?" but more logically, "How can teachers possibly hope to do their jobs without visiting the homes of the students they are attempting to serve?" Beyond the act of visiting the home of the student is the opportunity to develop or enhance the relationship between the student, the parents, and the teacher, and in the environment in which most of us live, the community.

There are a number of specific benefits that can be gained through teacher home visitations:

1. Teachers can obtain support from parents that will reinforce the teacher's efforts.
2. Teachers can gain insight into the parent-child relationships that influence the student.
3. Teachers can obtain specific information about the student that would be of value in providing motivation.

**Adapted from a paper written by DeLellis for Waynesboro Public Schools, Waynesboro, Virginia, under ESEA, Title IV-C contract, 1977.*

4. Teachers can observe situations that might foretell potential changes or account for changes that have already taken place in the student's behavior.
5. Teachers can provide information to parents regarding their children.
6. Teachers can learn how they are perceived by the parents of their students.
7. Teachers can observe the degree of social order or disorder in the home that would influence student work habits.
8. Parents can have the opportunity to ask questions of a professional educator.
9. Parents can meet the person who spends a major portion of the day with their child.
10. Parents can communicate from the security of their own home.
11. Parents can illustrate problems or frustrations that require direct observation.
12. Parents can ask how they can help the teacher, knowing that the teacher can see the home in which the proposed assistance would take place.
13. Students can have the pleasure of welcoming their teacher into their home (and watching them react to it).
14. Students can see their teacher in a new and, for the student, comfortable environment.
15. Students can show their teachers new aspects of themselves.
16. Students can illustrate problems and situations that they may find difficult to articulate.
17. Students can profit from the relationship that the teacher establishes and maintains with their parents.

Although the possible benefits are many, there is a major constraint that historically prevents successful visits by teachers. Teachers have had little, if any, training for home visitations or, for that matter, little training in establishing relationships with parents in any setting. In a recent national survey conducted by the Center for the Study of Parent Involvement, only five State Education Agencies reported that they required training or demonstration of competence, on the part of teachers, regarding working with parents, to say nothing of working with them in their homes (Safran: 1974).

Many teachers, however, develop competence in working with parents through their experience with parent-teacher conferences in school, PTA meetings, and special events held at school. But talking with parents in their own home requires a somewhat different approach, and the constraint against teacher home visitations as a result of lack of training may persist despite related experiences. The following sections are designed to be of assistance to the teacher in preparing for the home visitations and in actually conducting the visits. These sections should be read with the principle in mind that it is relationship between parent and teacher that is being sought—not merely seeing one another in a place other than the school.

Preparing for the Visit

As noted before, there are a variety of motives for teachers to visit the homes of their students. Perhaps it is to aid in resolving a personality clash between two students; perhaps it is to teach parents to help their child in completing homework; perhaps it is to follow up on agreements made at a recent teacher-parent conference held at the school; or perhaps it is to learn, from the parents, more about a certain aspect of their child's behavior. As the purposes for the visits vary, so must the preparation. There is not a practical formula that is appropriate for every home visitation. However, depending on the purposes for the visits that are proposed, there are a number of the questions that can act as a guide to the teacher. Thus, as teachers prepare to go out on home visitations the should ask themselves the following questions:

1. Why am I going there?
2. What can I accomplish there that I could not accomplish by inviting the parent to school?

3. What information should I be prepared to provide to the parent?
4. What might the parent hope to derive from the meeting other than specific information?
5. How long should the visit last in order to accomplish our immediate tasks?
6. Do I need to talk to both parents, if the household has two parents, or is it sufficient to talk to one of them?
7. Should the student be involved in all or part of the discussion?
8. What, if any, follow-up do I hope the parents will make after the visit?
9. How much of what I want to accomplish can be done in one visit?
10. Do both parents, in households where there are two, know that I am going to visit?
11. Does the student know I am going to visit?
12. Am I going to the home with an open mind?
13. Am I willing to learn from the parents?
14. Do I believe that they have anything of value to teach me?
15. Are my attitudes about the visit conducive to establishing a positive and ongoing relationship with the parents?

The questions and answers may vary from visit to visit, but there are four that must always be answered in the affirmative. If questions 12, 13, 14, and 15 are not answered positively, it may be better to postpone the visit until after personal feelings have been reevaluated in light of a teacher's profession. There are many valid reasons to make home visitations, but none of them include going through the motions of meaningless ritual that may do more harm than good.

Answering the questions relevant to the visit may be a solitary activity or it may be done jointly with the parent. If the parent is aware of the intended visit it may be helpful to communicate briefly regarding some of the topics that the teacher wishes to discuss. Of course, this prior communication should not be one way, and the agenda for a prearranged visit should be the result of joint planning. Only those visits which are spontaneous or for which there are some specific and justifiable reasons for not discussing the agenda with the parent need not be jointly planned.

After the questions most relevant to the proposed visit have been selected, the teacher should attempt to answer them in as much detail as time and knowledge of the situation allows. Preparation for the visit need not be a drawn out formality. However, it should be carefully approached and, if specific enough, can act as a guide to evaluate the visit and subsequent related activities. To a significant degree, the value of the relationship will depend upon the conduct of the teacher before, during, and after the visit. In the process of preparing for the visit it may be helpful for the teacher to recall the following assumptions about home visitations:

1. The visit is for the purpose of entering into a mutually beneficial helping relationship with the parents of the student, and is for the ultimate well being of the student.
2. The student, the parents, and siblings, the household in general, and the student's community are interrelated.
3. The parents may be just as anxious about the visit as the visiting teacher.

An additional admonition concerning teacher home visitations may be appropriate:

> Meeting the parent at home presents a teacher the chance to win or alienate a friend. Home visits can open the door to just 'getting acquainted' or to thinking through emotional problems of the child. (Gauerke: 1959)

As an aid in preparing for the visit, a sample check list is included at the end of the chapter. It is included only as a guide and should be adapted to meet the unique needs of each teacher.

Strategies for Home Visitations

There are three general categories of non-school settings in which teachers can get together with the parents of their students:

I. *Individual Visits*
   a. The teacher visits the home of the student.
   b. The teacher visits the place of business of the parent of the student.
   c. The teacher invites the parent(s) of the student to the teacher's home.

II. *Small Group Visits*
   a. The teacher attends a gathering of parents at the home of one of the parents.
   b. The teacher invites a small group of parents to the teacher's home.

III. *Incidental Community Encounters*
   a. The teacher attends community functions that are usually attended by parents.
   b. The teacher frequents places that are usually frequented by parents.

Implied in the variety of strategies listed above, are the ways in which teachers can aim toward the goals of Elsie Clapp, who ". . . promoted the idea that a school must become a place where learning and living converge so that what goes on in the community merges with what goes on in the activities of the classroom." (Decker: 1975)

It may not be possible or desirable for every teacher to employ every strategy. However, if treated as a set of alternative approaches to the establishment of constructive relationships between teachers and parents, an individual teacher may profit by employing a self-selected combination of them. For example, many school districts require their teacher to visit the homes of their students but do not provide sufficient time in which to accomplish the task. In such a case the teacher could elect to visit certain homes on an individual basis, and use one of the group meetings or incidental encounter methods to meet with other parents outside of school.

Principles of Helping Relationships

Regardless of how many of the strategies are employed, there are a number of principles that ought to be embraced during the course of the meetings that take place between parents and teachers. Some of these principles apply to helping relationships in almost any situation, while others apply uniquely to home visitations and related strategies.

Helping relationships must have purpose. (Smalley: 1967) A home visit may be very straight forward but the process of getting acquainted can have purpose. Both the teacher and the parent will have prepared agendas, consciously or not, for the home visit, and it is the responsibility of the teacher to attempt to ensure that both agendas receive sufficient attention. These agendas often include questions related to how one "feels" about the other or how the teacher interacts, at the feeling level, with the children in the home. Regardless of hidden agendas, diagnosis of problems and establishment of a level of interaction must take place. For relationships of duration longer than one meeting, purposes must be reevaluated continually.

Helping relationships have a "beginning, middle, and ending." (Smalley: 1967) It is surprising how many persons in the helping professions fail to take account of their use of time and time sequences as they assist their clients. If advantage is to be gained from proper recognition and use of time sequences, the teacher and parent must come to some agreement regarding the length of the relationship and the time allotted to each part.

For example, if one of the purposes of the relationship is to assist the parents in learning how to evaluate their child's home study habits or to assist them in learning how to evaluate their child's math homework, the following must be undertaken:

1. Arrive at a mutual decision regarding the goals and objectives, and for whom each objective is intended. (That is, if the objectives apply only to the parents' ability to evaluate home study habits and have nothing to do with any new behavior or ability on the part of the child, then the child would not be included as someone who had objectives to fulfill.)

2. Arrive at a mutual decision regarding the sequence of objectives.
3. Arrive at a mutual decision regarding the role that the teacher will play in the relationship, and at what point the teacher's participation will no longer be necessary.

A difficult thing for many persons in the helping professions to do is to end a relationship. Unfortunately, there is no formula for knowing when to end a helping relationship with a parent or any other client. However, the interested reader can gain more insight into the problem by reviewing Smalley, as cited in the list of suggested readings at the end of the chapter.

Progress must be at the pace preferred by the parent and/or student. Once establishment of a relationship is proposed, purpose established, goals sighted, roles determined, and objectives placed in sequence, it is up to the parent and/or student to determine how long each step or sequence should take to accomplish. Of course, the teacher is not powerless and can exert considerable influence. But the progress must be at the pace of the person actually doing the problem solving because teachers cannot be on constant call to solve the problems of the parents of their students, because teachers must eventually terminate the professional relationship, and primarily, because the teacher can merely assist the parent and/or student in solving their problems.

Teachers who find themselves actively trying to intervene in family relationships or trying to work out the problems for the family are: (1) not doing the family any favor because the professional helper is preventing the family from learning to solve its own problems and (2) transcending the teacher role to the point of violating their professional sanction. If family or individual problems are so great as to require constant and in-depth professional assistance, the teacher should advise the family or individual to seek another source of professional assistance more suited to the task. (For a detailed discussion of the pace at which the professional helper should take the client, see Smalley as cited in the list of suggested readings.)

Respect the parent. It should be remembered that regardless of a teacher's personal feelings or opinions regarding particular parents of their households, there can be no viable relationship without mutual respect and demonstration of that respect.

> There is little to be gained by talking down to the parent. A wise teacher does not underestimate the parent's perceptions. He avoids pedagogical language and other ways of making the parent feel inferior. (Gauerke: 1959)

This principle of respect for the parent has implications far beyond the normal course of daily face-to-face interaction between adults. Therefore, if a teacher suspects that there is insufficient respect for a relationship with a particular parent or, if after having entered the home of the parent, the teacher feels an abnormal amount of discomfort, the following self-assessment might help:

Do I feel what I feel because:

1. the household is disorderly?
2. the parents are too wealthy or too poor?
3. the parents speak differently?
4. the parent is drinking an alcoholic beverage?
5. the parent uses obscenities freely?
6. the parent has too much education or too little education?
7. there are annoying distractions?
8. the dog is barking with hostility?
9. the house is cold or hot or damp?
10. the husband keeps shouting at the wife or the wife keeps shouting at the husband?
11. the parent keeps shouting at the children?
12. the parent is cooking or trying to feed the children or baby?
13. the parents are of a different ethnic background?

If the answer to one or more of these questions is "Yes, that's why I feel uncomfortable with this parent," it should be remembered that this is the home of the student. And if the student can live and function there every day then the teacher can probably cope with it for a brief period.

This discussion has two points. The first point is that teachers, their attitudes, their life styles, the breadth of their experience, and their characters are open to the view of the parents whose homes they enter. An additional caution for a teacher to keep in mind is that it is not wise to feign respect when it is not truly felt. People see through such masks quite easily, and the result would likely do more harm than good. It is recommended that teachers who cannot find something about a particular parent of set of parents to respect refrain from insulting them by entering their home.

Remember there are single parents, working parents and that fathers are parents, too. Working parents and single parents may need extra consideration. Teachers should include them in school related activities by scheduling visits at convenient times. This may mean scheduling visits in the evening or even visiting the place of business of the working parent.

Although in many two parent households it is assumed that all liaisons with the school are the responsibility of the mother, teachers should not encourage or reinforce this assumption. There is no reason why a teacher visiting the home of a student should not make an attempt to involve both parents when both are potentially available. Further, it is easier to understand household relationships when both parents participate in the conversation.

Seek only necessary information and use it professionally. Home visits are made for specific professional reasons and personal curiosity should not cause a teacher to seek information that is not needed for those specific professional reasons. Whether the information is gathered through observation or conversation, there is one simple principle to recall: *All Information Is Confidential!*

Confidential information can be divided into three general categories: (1) that to be discussed with other professionals for specific professional reasons, with the permission of the parents; (2) that which must be reported to the proper authorities; and (3) that which may be shared with no one.

The relationship between teachers and parents or between teachers and students is not protected by law, as are the relationships between physicians, the clergy, and their clients. Teachers can be compelled to disclose information to the courts or to their superiors. In addition, not even the "protected" professionals listed above are exempt from the legal obligation to report information regarding child abuse or neglect.

Despite the qualifications regarding the ability of teachers to maintain absolute confidentiality with parents and students, there are some reasonable principles that the professional can follow. Teachers should:

1. Always ask the parents if they may share certain information, and specify the reasons for sharing it and the persons with whom they propose sharing it.
2. Never record irrelevant observations made in the household.
3. Never gossip.

In general, only information relevant to the professional relationship should be sought; and it should only be shared, with the permission of the parent, on a "need to know" basis, unless withholding certain information would be in violation of the law or of school board policy.

The National Education Association, addressed the treatment of confidential information, in Article I, Section 3 of the *N. E. A. Code of Ethics.* (Rath, et. al.: 1971) As a guide to social workers, the National Association of Social Workers addressed the same matter in its code of ethics. The code says simple, "I respect the privacy of the people I serve. . . . I use in a responsible manner information gained in professional relationships." The Social Work Code of Ethics is included at the end of this chapter. (For a discussion of teacher ethics see Gauerke as cited in the list of suggested readings. For additional insight into teacher conduct at the time of the visit, see the Laundry List of Do's and Don't's at the end of the chapter.)

After the Visit

After the visit has been concluded the teacher still has a follow-up function. Notes on the meeting should be written as soon as possible so the details are not forgotten. However, the recording should not be done while in front of the house because it may cause anxiety in the parents.

If arrangements have been made for following through with some specific activity or another appointment has been made, the teacher should call or send a personal message so that the parents will know that the follow through is being done. If any referrals to social workers, school psychologists, therapists, counselors, etc., are to be made, they should be done as soon as possible. The teacher should contact the parents to let them know that the referral was made or that another teacher or the principal was informed, and let the parents know what to expect and when to expect it even if someone else will also be contacting them.

The next time the child of the parents visited is seen, the teacher should be certain to make some positive comments about the student's parents, siblings, and/or household. The child will definitely be wondering about the visit and the teacher should take advantage of this opportunity to communicate. Of course, this should not be the last time that the child is reminded that some particular aspect of the experience at his/her home was enjoyed. In addition, if the teacher was given an invitation to drop in whenever in the neighborhood, doing so once in a while may be advisable, depending upon the circumstances of the relationship.

After the obligations to the parents and student have been fulfilled the teacher should evaluate the visit for personal development.

Self-Evaluation

Self-evaluation is for the development of the teacher's personal and professional skills and to raise questions about possible biases, mind sets, and prejudices. The assumptions underlying self-evaluation are that everyone's personal and professional skills can be developed and that everyone has biases, mind sets, and prejudices that warrant examination. Self-evaluation can enhance skills and attitudes in ways from which both the teacher and the student will profit.

The self-evaluation instrument at the end of the chapter contains a number of open-ended questions. It is designed to be filled out quickly and indicate steps to improve future performance. As with many other phases of self-assessment, it is wise to consult a fellow teacher or a supervisor if a teacher has questions to discuss. At no time, however, should any obligation be felt to consult with anyone or show them the evaluation instrument.

Some teachers will not wish to fill out the entire instrument after every visit. Some will wish to substitute questions of their own; some will prefer to answer a few of the questions superficially and others in depth beyond the confines of the space allowed on the instrument; and some teachers will wish to concentrate their efforts on only a few areas that they feel need improvement. All of these options can profit the teachers who take the time to evaluate themselves, regardless of how they utilize the instrument.

Because no one sees the self-evaluation instrument without permission, teachers are encouraged to be honest with themselves. This, however, is easier said than done, particularly when their role in a relationship is one over which they have only partial control. If, for example, the teacher and the parent did not come to an agreement regarding the potential solution to the student's problem, it is difficult to be certain why. In evaluating the visit, the teacher should not look for "fault" when trying to explain why something went wrong, but for probable causes. The background of experiences that each brought to the meeting, the expectations, the hopes, the benefits that were held prior to the meeting should be examined. When attempting to explain what took place the feelings that usually accompany the words "fault" and "blame" should never enter the teacher's mind. If they do, then that in itself may be a probable cause for what occurred at the meeting.

Continuing the Relationship

Throughout the discussion of teacher/parent home visitations, one of the themes that has pervaded each section has been that visiting the home just for the sake of the visit is not sufficient. One of the major benefits of meeting with parents outside of the school is that it frequently allows for the establishment of a relationship on a more relaxed basis.

Smalley's admonition that professional helping relationships must have a built-in ending should not be taken to mean that there should be an arbitrary ending. Nor should it be taken to mean that as new purposes for working with a parent arise, a relationship cannot be revitalized. It is much easier to revitalize a professional helping relationship with a parent with whom the teacher had never completely lost contact than with a parent who had been visited only once.

Techniques for continuing relationships established through home visitations have been discussed previously in this guide. However, the importance of maintaining positive contact with parents warrants further emphasis. The differences between home and school are such that teachers, parents, and children are constantly forced to attempt to bridge gaps that have developed between them. Poulton and James stated:

> The fact that there can exist differences between the prevailing educational climates presented to the child in the family on the one hand and the classroom on the other gives rise to potential conflict and misunderstanding between teachers and parents which allow no straight-forward solution. (Poulton and James: 1975)

Given the assumption that it is easier to deal with conflict and misunderstanding through relationship than through crisis resolution, it follows that teachers should make every effort to establish and maintain rapport with parents. In continuing a relationship, teachers should act on the principle that the best relationship between teachers and parents is based on communication and that communication, at its best, is a continuous process of sharing and synthesizing ideas.

Several methods for maintenance of relationship are possible.

1. If invited to return to the house, make an effort to do so, even if for a brief visit to say hello.
2. Communicate with parents regarding strategies that were worked out at a previous meeting to let parents know whether they are successful or unsuccessful, and invite further discussion if necessary. This communication can be accomplished through telephone calls, letters, personally written notes carried by students or through incidental encounters. A teacher might wish to set a goal of communicating with five or six parents every week through one or more of the methods.
3. After having promised to do something, the teacher should communicate personally to let the parent know that the promise has been fulfilled. This communication with the parent applies even when a referral is made to another professional and the other professional may be expected to get in touch with the parent.
4. The teacher should let the student know that the opportunity to visit the student's home was enjoyed. This should be conveyed to the student in as personal a way as possible, and positive aspects of the child's household should be mentioned as frequently as circumstances allow.
5. After self-evaluation, teachers, who find themselves reluctant to continue a relationship with certain parents, should redouble their efforts to communicate with those parents in particular.

In the Student's Home: A Laundry List of Do's and Dont's

1. Converse–don't interrogate. At all times, when you are in the home of the parent, remember that you are there for the purpose of establishing a relationship as well as to gather desired information.
2. When in the home, be honest about your feelings but never complain about school policies, administrators, fellow teachers, students, or other parents. Such behavior does not assist you in establishing professional rapport with anyone, and may cause the parent to be concerned about how you will discuss him/her with others. (Gauerke: 1959)
3. Don't be preoccupied with your own professionalism to the extent that you allow yourself to be perceived as cold or aloof. You are human. Allow your humanity to show.
4. If children are present in the home, be certain to greet them. If you don't know their names, then learn them and use them.
5. If the parent recommends that you use first names, then take advantage of this opportunity to establish informality.
6. If it is necessary to take notes, do so in a way that does not alarm the parents. Be certain that they know what you are writing. One way to do this is to read it back to them as if to request that they check it for accuracy.
7. In some situations, it may be desirable to record certain agreements. In such cases let the parents have a copy immediately, encourage them to write it themselves. If you make referrals, write them as well.
8. When you enter the house you will probably be asked to sit down. Do so and try to be and look comfortable and relaxed. Don't sit on the edge of the chair as if you are ready to spring out the door.
9. Don't watch the clock. If the appointment is scheduled for a certain length of time, it may be appropriate for you to look at your watch or ask for the time when you have been there for about that long.
10. If the parents cannot give you their complete attention, attempt to fit into the activities that are preoccupying them. If, for example, you notice that it is necessary for one of the parents to continually run to the kitchen to check the oven, suggest that you move to the kitchen.
11. If your host offers you something to eat or a cup of coffee, accept it. Eating together has long been a social institution related to communication.
12. Although you are there to observe the household as well as to communicate with the parents, don't allow yourself to be observed scrutinizing every detail of the house and its interworkings.
13. When the parents or others in the house are talking, either to you or to someone else, listen actively. Do not be so preoccupied with your agenda that you fail to respond to theirs.
14. Break the ice. It may be difficult for the parents to relax with you. Therefore, you must attempt to create a comfortable situation by conversing on subjects that are not threatening. Commenting on the house or the weather is not beneath the level of conversation that is sometimes necessary. After you believe that the situation is relaxed enough, go gradually into the business at hand. A possible beginning is a request for minor demographic information for the school files. However, never begin by saying, "Well, now let's get down to business" or "The reason for this visit is . . .." Don't obscure the reason for the visit or the fact that it is a professional visit but remember that the parents may be apprehensive.
15. Before the visit has concluded be certain that at some point you made at least one positive comment about the household, the children, some article of furniture, etc.
16. Dress in a comfortable way. Remember that the more formally you are dressed, the more formal you will appear. This is not to suggest that you should wear recreational clothing, but that you should not be over dressed.

17. If you are visiting in a home in which the parents earn very little money, avoid what may appear to be an ostentatious display of your relatively high economic level.
18. If the parents you are visiting normally converse in a language different than yours, and if you do not speak their primary language well enough to conduct a professional conference, bring with you someone who can translate. Never, except in an emergency, should you use the parents' child as a translator. Such a practice is degrading to the parents, and quite often, a great deal seems to get "lost" in translation particularly if the translator is the topic of conversation.
19. At the end of the meeting summarize any agreements that were made and verify timetables that may be relevant. Go over your list of objectives for the meeting to be certain that nothing was forgotten.

List of Suggested Readings

Owen L. Caskey and Ivanna Richardson, "Understanding and Helping Child-Abusing Parents," Elementary School *Guidance and Counseling*, March, 1975.

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James Raths, et. al., *Studying Teaching*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1971.

Daniel Safran (ed.), *State Education Agencies and Parent Involvement: A National Survey of State Legislation and the Policies and Perspectives of State Departments of Education*, Berkeley, California: Center for the Study of Parent Involvement, February, 1974.

Ruth Smalley, *Theory for Social Work Practice*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1967.

Gary B. Wilson and Barbara Wingate, *Parents and Teachers: Humanistic Educational Techniques to Facilitate Communication Between Parents and Staff of Educational Programs*, Atlanta, Georgia: Humanistics Press, 1974.

See Self-Evaluation instrument and Preparation Check List that follow.

TEACHER'S SELF-EVALUATION OF TEACHER/PARENT HOME VISITATION

Name of student _____ Date of visit _____ Time___ to ___

Persons contacted and relationship to student: _____

1. How was the meeting characterized (productive, wasteful, warm, cold, formal, informal, hostile, friendly, intense, superficial, chaotic, rambling, focused, etc.)? _____

2. Was the parental attitude toward me at the end of the meeting the same as it was at the beginning? If different, how did it change? Do the parents have confidence in me? _____

3. How many of the ideas and insights that were generated in this conference were initiated by the parents? _____

4. If the parents did not participate in generating ideas or solutions to problems, is there anything I can do at the next meeting to assist the process of participation? _____

5. If the student was involved, how do I feel about the nature and value of the involvement? _____

6. Did we come to a general understanding about the nature and/or causes of any problems? _____

7. Did we come to a general understanding about what could be done about the problems? _____

8. What new insights arose as a result of the meeting? _____

9. What information did I fail to get? _____

10. What questions, asked by the parents, was I unable to answer, if any? _____

11. Was I able to recommend appropriate strategies for dealing with problems? _____

12. As a result of the visit, what short range and long range action am I going to take with regard to the parents and their child? When will I do these things? _____

_____

_____

13. What were my greatest accomplishments at the meeting? What do the parents feel were their greatest accomplishments? _____

_____

14. How did I conduct myself during the meeting? Do I feel that I did what I ought to have done, both professionally and as regards my personal demeanor? _____

_____

_____

15. Has my attitude toward the parents and/or the student changed as a result of the meeting? ____

_____

_____

16. Would the parents feel comfortable if they came to the school to see me or if I visited them again? What could I do to increase their level of comfort? _____

_____

17. What did I learn at the home that I could not have learned through a conference at school? ___

_____

_____

18. What can I do to enhance the next meeting, and what would be gained by it? _____

_____

_____

19. Other comments or questions that I should consider or discuss with someone else: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

PREPARATION CHECK LIST FOR TEACHER/PARENT HOME VISITATION

Name of Student: _____

Date of Visit: _____ Time of Visit: _____ to _____

Name of Person(s) to be visited: _____

Address of Place to be visited: _____

Do I know how to get there? _____ Phone Number: _____

1. Have I communicated with the parents regarding the date, time, and general goals of the visit? ___

_____

2. What general goals do we have for the meeting? _____

_____

3. What specific information or insights do I want to derive from the meeting? _____

_____

_____

4. What outcomes do we hope will result from the meeting? _____

_____

_____

5. What materials do I want to bring with me, if any? _____

_____

6. What information should I be prepared to provide to the parents? _____

_____

7. Have I discussed the visit with the student? _____

8. Have I informed the school office that I will be out of the building during the time of the meeting? _____

9. Other details or concerns: _____

_____

_____

_____

SOCIAL WORK CODE OF ETHICS*

As a member of the National Association of Social Workers, I Commit Myself to Conduct my Professional Relationships in Accord with the Code and Subscribe to the Following Statements:

I regard as my primary obligation the welfare of the individual or group served, which includes action for improving social conditions.

I will not discriminate because of race, color, religion, age, sex, or national ancestry; and in my job capacity will work to prevent and eliminate such discrimination in rendering service, in work assignments, and in employment practices.

I give precedence to my professional responsibility over my personal interests.

I hold myself responsible for the quality and extent of the service I perform.

I respect the privacy of the people I serve.

I use in a responsible manner information gained in professional relationships.

I treat with respect the findings, view, and actions of colleagues, and use appropriate channels to express judgment on these matters.

I practice social work within the recognized knowledge and competence of the profession.

I recognize my professional responsibility to add my ideas and findings to the body of social work knowledge and practice.

I accept responsibility to help protect the community against unethical practice by any individuals or organizations engaged in social welfare activities.

I stand ready to give appropriate professional service in public emergencies.

I distinguish clearly, in public, between my statements and actions as an individual and as a representative of an organization.

I support the principle that professional practice requires professional education.

I accept responsibility for working toward the creation and maintenance of conditions within agencies which enable social workers to conduct themselves in keeping with this code.

I contribute my knowledge, skills, and support to the programs of human welfare.

**Adopted from National Association of Social Workers.*

Home/School/Community: The Involvement Imperative for Responsive Action

by Larry E. Decker
School of Education
University of Virginia

The child's home and family background as well as the health of the community environment have proven to be primary variables related to academic success and achievement. These variables are significantly related, not only to academic success, but to social-psychological adjustment, delinquency problems and many other existing and potential ills in society. Research studies have also shown that mutually interdependent efforts can have beneficial results in helping to solve a wide range of problems facing homes, schools and communities.

Although much data is available on the benefits of community involvement, educators have not significantly altered educational/teaching practices by utilizing this data to plan positive programs that impact the home and community environments. In particular, they have not integrated community involvement in their approaches to various teaching theories and strategies. The process of involvement can take place through the topics covered in this publication: home visits, volunteer programs, utilizing community resources as well as action learning projects, cross age tutoring programs, etc., in a planned and organized approach.

The home-school-community involvement process must become an integral part of teaching strategies if schools are to responsively address the criticisms of educational practices.

Criticisms of Educational Practices

In the last decade education has been subject to a growing attack and increasingly severe criticism. Much of the criticism has been warranted. Many of the solutions proposed for the problems facing schools, in particular, and society, in general, have been of a cure-all nature and aloof from reality. There is increasing documentation of malpractice stemming from viewing education in terms of the role of the professional elite as well as documentation of the negative effects of many of today's educational practices on the learning environment and social climate.

Yet, even today, with all the criticism they receive, schools continue to have a unique place in American society. As Illich described them:

> Rich and poor alike depend on schools and hospitals which guide their lives, form their world view, and define for them what is legitimate and what is not. Both view doctoring oneself as irresponsible, learning on one's own as unreliable and community organization, when not paid for by those in authority, as a form of aggression or subversion. For both groups the reliance on institutional treatment renders independent accomplishment suspect.[1]

Because of the school's pre-eminent position, he concluded the way to develop self and community reliance is to "deschool" society. He argued:

> Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas observed that 'the only way to establish an institution is to finance it.' The corollary is also true. Only by channeling dollars away from the institutions which now treat health, education, and welfare can further impoverishment resulting from their disabling side effects be stopped.[2]

Less extreme than advocating deschooling, Bronfenbrenner nevertheless stated his conclusion in terms that are almost as emphatic:

> . . . if the current trend persists, if the institutions of our society continue to remove parents, other adults and older youth from active participation in the lives of children and if the resulting vacuum is filled by the age segregated peer group, we can anticipate increased alienation, indifference, antagonism and violence on the part of the younger generation in all segments of our society–middle class children as well as the disadvantaged.[3]

Reports on education by the President's Science Advisory Committee, the Kettering Foundation, and the United States Office of Education also came to the same conclusion that "the ordinary processes of socialization have been weakened, confused and disjointed and the symptoms are everywhere apparent."[4] Bronfenbrenner's and the reports' recommendations were all aimed at increasing children's contact with the community in realistic, meaningful ways.

Cremin looked at the process of involvement in terms of visualizing what he called a "modern school of education." He said a modern school of education ought to look at education:

> . . . comprehensively, and this means considering the educative process across the entire life span, in all the situations and institutions in which it occurs, in a wide variety of social and cultural contexts, and in the past as well as the present and alternatively imagined futures.
>
> . . . relationally and this means viewing each educational transaction or situation in relation to all other educational transactions or situations that invariably affect it.
>
> . . . in its broader educational context (the theory of education is a theory of the relation of various educative interactions and institutions to one another and to society at large).[5]

Support Systems for Fostering Community Involvement

To make a significant change that differs from traditional education requires a supportive climate and a support base from which to work. This support base will provide policies, administrative structure and leadership that is necessary to make the constructive changes happen. One teacher can begin the process, but to have a significant impact requires orchestration, as well as cooperation and commitment, of a number of different groups. As Minzey and LeTarte stated:

> Community involvement must be a joint undertaking and approached on the assumption that both lay citizens and professional educators have a unique and valuable contribution to make and each, because of their uniqueness, cannot develop an adequate educational program without the other.[6]

Cremin summed up the challenge facing educators in his statement:

> . . . we are going to have to build a body of theory that draws its data and its concepts from all the institutions that educate, that leads us to methods and techniques appropriate to each, and that helps us design programs for the particular stages of life where they will be most efficient and most effective.[7]

A Comprehensive Approach

The community education approach is based on a broad conceptualization of education and the role of the school. It integrates the school into the community in meaningful ways and advocates a curriculum "flexibly structured about the enduring life-concerns of human beings everywhere."[8]

The implementation model is structured on a direct, concentrated effort by a school system to assume a catalytic leadership role for integrating pragmatic features which meet both common

and unique educational needs of people by utilizing all of the community's human and physical resources for the purpose of improving the quality of life of the individual and the community.

The components of the community education approach are:

1. Opening school buildings on a planned, organized basis so that educational facilities and plants become community-centered schools open during the entire year, 18 hours a day or longer if necessary.
2. Providing a delivery system and community process that involves all ages and addresses life-long learning needs and desires.
3. Facilitating the development of a system for interagency collaboration and cooperative planning in the delivery of comprehensive human services.
4. Providing a range of options and programs that give people opportunities to share concerns and talents that assist in establishing an educational system more responsive to the needs and desires of people.
5. Providing a structure for communication and effective citizen participation and parity relationships in problem-solving, educational decision-making, and community development efforts.
6. Structuring curriculum around, not only lifelong education opportunities, but also life-centered living and concerns for improvement of the quality of life in a community.

What is proposed in the community education approach is based on creating mutually interdependent home-school-community linkages. Through the utilization of community resources, this approach provides processes for the involvement and participation of the home, school and community in the lives of all community citizens. The processes operate in such a way that motivation and self-help mechanisms are built in and a climate is created which encourages the exchanging of ideas. The communication network which develops between the home, school and community allows for the continual interaction and systematic feedback which is necessary for responsive action.

The Need for Responsive Action

Educators need to stop reacting defensively to warranted criticism and begin acting responsively to improve the living/learning environment. Public educational systems have the potential to assume a responsive, coordinating role that touches the lives of more people, more often, than any other single institution in America. Schools have at their disposal more ready resources to initiate, facilitate, and maintain ongoing processes and practices which can have a monumental effect upon the life of the child and all community citizens. But for this role to become a reality, the response to criticism must be positive action.

It may well be true as Gintis argued:

> In the final analysis "de-schooling" is irrelevant because we cannot "de-factory," "de-office," or "de-family," save perhaps at the still unenvisioned end of a long process of social reconstruction.[9]

But it is a fact that the criticism of the deschoolers and others is well founded and based on documented evidence. It is true as Gintis also pointed out:

> . . . structural changes in the educational process can be socially relevant only when they speak to potentials for liberation and equality in our day-to-day labors.[10]

Defensive reaction will not lead to overcoming the problems in education that form the basis for the criticism. At a time when many thoughtful observers feel that the democratic system and the American way of life is in a critical era, the need is for responsive action. Olsen and Clark summed up the opinion of many others when they stated:

That response is imperative now. It requires both short and long range futuristic imagination, decisive thinking, and effective planning on the part of many men and women in many walks of life and by fast increasing numbers of youth still in schools and colleges.[11]

Conclusion

The role of the teacher is critical if education is to address the problems facing many communities and be responsive to the needs of all community citizens, young and old, advantaged and disadvantaged, collectively and individually. By utilizing community resources, human and physical, in the classroom and actively seeking ways to involve the school and community in a wide variety of situations, teachers can play a key role in addressing the present challenges to education in a manner beneficial to all. The community involvement process provides teachers with the opportunity to "use the full educative process to develop in all students a concerned awareness of 'the human prospect' in terms of its hazards, resources, and opportunities."[12]

FOOTNOTES

1. Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1970), p. 3.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
3. Lawrence A. Cremin, *Public Education* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1976), p. 65.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
6. Minzey and LeTarte, *Community Education: From Programs to Process* (Midland, Michigan: Pendell Publishing Company, 1972), p. 9.
7. Cremin, op. cit., p. 87.
8. Edward G. Olsen and Phillip A. Clark, *Life-Centering Education* (Midland, Michigan: Pendell Publishing Company, 1977), p. 76.
9. Herbert Gintis, "Toward a Political Economy of Education," *After Deschooling, What*, Ivan Illich, et. al., (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1973), p. 32.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.
11. Olsen and Clark, op. cit., p. 23.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

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COMMUNITY EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS FOR PROMOTIONAL AND INSTRUCTIONAL USE

- *Mid-Atlantic Community Education Consortium Informational Portfolio*
  Cost–$3.75 per Portfolio
  A collection of reprints and general promotional booklet and flyers used to provide a basic overview on Community Education Concepts and Services.

- *Administrators and Policy Makers' Views of Community Education*
  Edited by Larry E. Decker and Virginia A. Decker
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- *Community Involvement for Classroom Teachers*
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  A theoretical as well as a practical guide to implementing basic elements of community involvement to enhance the learning process in the K-12 program. 1977, 64 pages.

- *Citizen's Participation. . . What Others Say. . . What Others Do. . .*
  By John Warden
  Single copy–$0.50 Bulk prices available.
  An overview on the entire citizen's participation field with over forty key references, quotations and 17 citizen's participation vehicles are highlighted. 1977, 24 pages.

- *Public Schools: Use Them Don't Waste Them*
  Edited by Michael H. Kaplan
  Single copy free. Bulk Prices–$22.00 per 100.
  A promotional booklet drawing upon the editorial comments of syndicated columnist Sylvia Porter. 1975, 12 pages.

- *What Others Say About Community Schools*
  Edited by John W. Warden.
  Sample copy free. Bulk prices–$24.00 per 100.
  A collection of 39 supportive statements about Community Schools. 1976, 16 pages.

- Other Publications in process:
  Creating Interagency Projects by Joseph Ringers, Jr.; *Community Educator's Guide to Adult Education* by Leroy Miles and Steve R. Parson; *A Study Committee Guide to Planning for Community Education* by Michael H. Kaplan; *The Money Process. . . Grantsmanship and Proposal Writing* by Virginia A. Decker and Larry E. Decker.

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COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS
JULY 1977 – FIRST PRINTING

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4. What material did you find most helpful and/or potentially useful in the classroom?

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7. Are there any areas that you think should be deleted?

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